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TV World

international business magazine for television and video

March/April 1989.

Animation Special

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Tél.: (514) 843 70 70
Télex:05562171 Mtl 1138
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TV World

Editor
Ross Welford
Deputy Editor
Susan Eardley
Production Assistant
Vanessa Collu
Advertising Manager
Sarah Horner
Sales Executive
Lydia Fairfield
Circulation Manager
Kevin Crook
Publisher
Graeme Sutherland

Correspondents
Amsterdam – Bill Third
Bangkok – Jay Adair
Belgrade – Alexander Pasternijak
Beirut – Mounir Abboud
Berlin – Bill Peterson
Brussels – Jean-Louis Erneux
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Warsaw – Bogdan Slowikowski
Wellington – Lyn Williamson

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Fax: 03-746 0847

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Cover: Hard takes on soft. Pictures taken from Bandai's "Star Ship Trooper" and Nelvana's "Babar".

An array of the Warner Bros. characters for whom Mel Blanc has created voices. Blanc was honoured at the LA animation celebration. *(See p.22.)*

THE Editor's LETTER

A question: Who usually suffers most when monopolies wield too much power? Answer: the customer, of course.

So who should be least pleased with the present manic round of takeovers, mergers and stock-trading? The TV buyer, that's who.

In the one month that has passed since the last issue of *TV World* appeared, two enormous companies have become one; one pretty huge company has been taken over by another even huger; and rumours continue about a giant-size takeover of still another. Is anyone safe?

The merger of Time Inc. and Warner Communications has, at any rate, assured their safety. Nobody will now be able to buy out this new entity which becomes the largest media company in the world. The American entertainment industry uttered a sign of relief that was virtually audiable on the opposite sides of both of America's oceans.

The reasons for the relief is largely illusory. Sure, it stops Japanese, Australian and European giants taking over any parts of Time Inc. or Warners (though both companies deny that this was the reason for the merger.) But there are still plenty of other companies either looking for a white knight across the sea, or feebly fending off a hostile takeover. One merger will not stop that.

At the end of last month's Monte Carlo market it was revealed that troubled New World has been bought out by France's Pathé. (Pathé's owner, Italian Giancarlo Paretti, is also the controller of the Cannon Group).

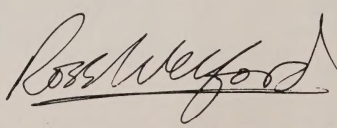
And rumours persist about a takeover at Columbia Pictures by Sony, the Japanese electronics giant that last year bought CBS Records. The speculation has been further accelerated by the marriage of Columbia Pictures to its "sister" company Tri-Star Pictures.

The list could go on: Rupert Murdoch's entry into US broadcasting and production; the startling growth of TVS in the UK, capped by the purchase of MTM Productions; Carlton Communications' buyout of Technicolor; and so on....

No wonder the Americans were becoming nervous.

But what about the customer in all this, in this case, the TV buyer — and (eventually) the viewer? Will he or she be better served in a market where he has fewer choices of where to spend his money? It is doubtful. How can he be best served when four years ago he could, for instance, buy programmes from Warners, Lorimar, Telepictures and HBO (owned by Time Inc.) and now must buy from only one?

Add this 'monopoly' factor to the fact that prices are already being driven up in many territories thanks to an increase in demand, and soon TV buyers will be wondering how they ever had it so cheap.



World Round-up

● Eurosport, the Sky TV/EBU pan-European sports channel, has until March 31 to reply to a complaint served against it by the European Commission last December, on the grounds that it is in breach of European rules on competition. The complaint came as a result of pressure from Europe's other sports channel, Screensport.

● The international cable service launched by The Discovery Channel (TDC) and United Cable Television in the US will be called TDC-Europe and will have an initial focus on the UK and Scandinavian countries, with a mid-April launch on Intelsat V. The service will later be expanded to provide from seven to 12 hours daily. It originates from London, where the non-fiction format will be tailored for foreign audiences, including interstitial material, promotions and voice overs.

● The Federal Communications Commission has reaffirmed its decision to let TV stations buy exclusive rights to syndicated programmes despite warnings from the cable industry of programme blackouts and viewer confusion.

● TransWorld Entertainment (TWE) has formed Moonstone International. The new company will licence rights in all media for the Royal Films library and will handle foreign sales for select TWE, Epic and CCA films.

● As TV World went to press (mid-March) it seemed likely that British Telecom would win the cable television franchise for Hongkong. Bringing cable to nearly six million people would cost around £290 million (US$508 million).

● Australian authorities have concluded that there is a lare potential market for pay-TV, so long as they can own at least part of the operation.

● **Correction: an unfortunate error in last month's TV World implied that Sean McBride, the founder of Amnestry International, was running the Avise news agency in Holland. Mr McBride died two years ago, and we apologise for this mistake, caused during sub-editing.**

● Harmony Gold and Richard Harrison have formed Crossbow Entertainment Group for the production and distribution of low to medium-budget theatrical films.

● BBC Enterprises' Showcase this year resulted in sales worth £7 million (US$12.25 million). Chief Executive James Arnold-Baker said that Showcase accounts for 50 per cent of Enterprises' total European business. Showcase '89 attracted 242 delegates from 80 broadcasters and 30 countries.

"Death of a Son" from the BBC Movie Collection.

● British Satellite Broadcasting (BSB) has unveiled a £20 million (US$35 million) advertising campaign in the run up to the autumn launch of its TV services.

● 11 US public television stations have agreed to pool acquisition funds. The initial fund should exceed US$1,000,000 and will serve as a base for a Premium Service under the auspices of the Inter-regional Programme Service (IPS) — the programme acquisition and brokering agency of the Eastern Educational TV Network.

● Capital Cities/ABC has acquired a 49 per cent stake in the West German TV and film company Tele Munchen, owned by the film and TV producer Herbert Kloiber.

● VTM, Belgium's new commercial channel, has fallen foul of several consumer groups who have objected to the channel's practice of screening ads during movies, claiming it is breaking a law passed last year.

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Enter Time and Warner

NEW YORK: Early March saw the creation of the world's largest media corporation with the merger of two US giants — Warner Communications and Time Inc.

The new company Time Warner is seen as a move to provide another brick in the wall of defence against invasion from European and Japanese media groups eager to establish themselves in the US market.

The creation of Time Warner with an estimated value of US$15 billion, will have both national and international repercussions. Both companies believe that the new corporation, with its combined strengths in the fields of book and magazine publishing, TV, film and record production will be able to compete on a worldwide scale.

In the US, the cable industry is likely to be shaken by the merger. Time Inc. is the owner of the cable channel Home Box Office (HBO) which stands to gain considerably from its alignment with Warner, the biggest supplier of series to the three networks and the second biggest producer of series for first run sydication.

Warners recently increased its position in the production business when it merged with Lorimar Telepictures earlier this year. In this US$630 million transaction, Warner almost doubled its programme output.

● Last month US New World was taken over by French-based media company Pathe, owned by Giancarlo Paretti. It becomes part of a group including the US Cannon.

A frog, a pig, and Russia

MOSCOW: Henson International Television, maker of *The Muppet Show*, is completing negotiations with the Soviet Union for a merchandising deal based around characters from the *Fraggle Rock* and *Muppet Babies* series, both of which have been seen in the USSR since earlier this year.

Gosteleradio, the Soviet state broadcaster, reports that after the initial showing of *Fraggle Rock* in the children's peak viewing time of Sunday morning, 3000 letters were received from youngsters wanting more. *Muppet Babies* and *The Storyteller* have been released on home-video.

The merchandising deal will initially be for clothing, said to be the first deal of its kind in the USSR. Plans are well advanced for *The Muppet Show* to be transmitted on Gosteleradio.

● *Picture shows Kermit The Frog and Miss Piggy in Red Square on a promotional tour of Moscow.*

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Expanding the Universe of Television

New deals...new deals...

A Tale Of Two Cities, the four-hour mini-series made by **Granada Television and Dune** of France, is to be broadcast in Hong Kong and Singapore. It will be shown on ATV Hong Kong.

Both countries have also taken the Len Deighton spy series *Game Set and Match* starring Ian Holm; *Wired*, a 13-hour series featuring some of the big names in rock music today, and *Smile Jamaican*, a charity rock concert held last year in aid of the Jamaica hurricane disaster fund, produced by Initial Television and distributed by Granada International.

Harmony Gold, has become sole international distributor for a special wildlife show created by the husband and wife team of Dick and Brownie Borden. This is a 26 half-hour series that includes realistic live footage and wildlife photography that has credited Dick Borden and Brownie Borden with many photographic and international awards.

Shot with an innovative camera, patented by the Bordens and known as a conservation gun, it enables the photographer to clearly see the target animal through a four-by-four inch view window with film footage often only seen through a hunter's gun.

Fox/Lorber Associates has acquired all worldwide rights to *The Discovery Program* production. The highly acclaimed two-year old *Discovery Program*, created by Chanticleer Films, with original support from David Puttnam at Columbia Pictures, provides film professionals with a first-time oportunity to direct live-action shorts.

World International Network has acquired foreign distribution rights to *Desperados: The Camarena Story*, Michael Mann's upcoming six-hour mini-series for NBC, based on Elaine Shannon's expose of the US war on drugs and the life and death of one unsung hero who paid the ultimate price in his struggle against monumental odds.

Major casting for *Desperados: The Camarena Story* will be announced soon with production scheduled to begin in March in various international locations. The mini-series will air next autumn on the NBC Television Network and will be distributed worldwide by World International Network with the exception of the Spanish-speaking countries and the United States.

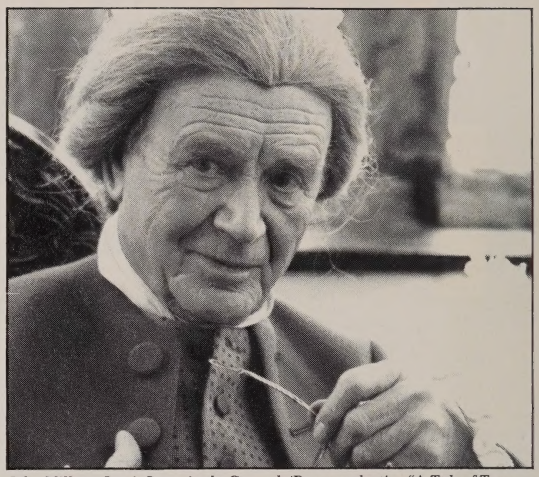
D.L. Taffner/Ltd. will distribute worldwide (excluding US) 26 episodes of *Aquaventure*, the weekly half-hour water sports series. The series searches the world for the best in water sports, including a close encounter with blue sharks off the coast of California, fly fishing for trout in New Zealand and exploring the depths of the Caribbean Sea in a two man submarine. *Aquaventure* is produced by Satellite Televised Syndicated.

BBC Enterprises has signed a co-production agreement with **Beyond International** of Sydney for *Global Warming* — a special edition of BBC-2's *Nature* programme to mark United Nations World Environment Day on 5 June 1989.

Global Warming deals with the greenhouse effect and the impact that changes in the earth's climate will have on every aspect of life for families around the world.

France Media International has sold the French animated cartoon *Shagma or the World Down Under* (a **RMC Audiovisual A2 Tele Hachette** coproduction) to Chinese and Hong Kong television.

Granada's prison drama *Dead Man Out,* which had already been acquired by the French pay-television channel Canal Plus, has now been bought by Reteitalia for showing both in Italy and on the private station La 5 in France. The 90-minute movie will be broadcast on the French-and Italian-owned La 5 later next year, following its showing on Canal Plus.



John Mills as Jarvis Lorry in the Granada/Dune production "A Tale of Two Cities".

People

Anne Mathews has been appointed director of market co-ordination at **Columbia Pictures Entertainment, Inc.** (CPE). She will be responsible for ancilliary market co-ordination of the filmed entertainment products of Columbia Pictures, Tri-Star Pictures, and Columbia Pictures Television.

LWT has announced the appointment of Greg Dyke as deputy managing director.

Trans World International (TWI) has announced the appointment of Bryan Cowgill as managing director of its UK subsidiary — **Champion Television Limited** — that will provide sports programming for British Satellite Broadcasting (BSB). Cowgill is the first appointment to be made. He started work on 1 February and is currently involved in forming the structure of the company. He has over 35 years experience in production, direction and mangement.

Michael Hadley has been appointed executive in charge of development for **Producers Group International's** movie-of-the-week/feature sector. He recently produced PGI's sitcom for CTV and 82 per cent of the US syndicated markets and served as co-producer for another the CTV sitcom series, for all of its three seasons.

John Laing joins **Orion International** as senior vice president for International Television Distribution. He will be based at Orion's New York headquarters offices and will report directly to Robert Meyers, President of Orion Int. John Laing has spent the last five years at Warner Bros. Television most recently as vice president, sales.

Dennis H. Wood has been appointed vice-president of Worldwide Pay Television at **Columbia Pictures International Television** (CPIT), an operating unit of Columbia Pictures Entertainment, Inc. (CPE). He will be based in New York and will be responsible for planning and co-ordinating worldwide pay television marketing and sales activities.

Rod Murray has joined **D.L. Taffner Ltd** as director of research.

Raul Lefcovich has been promoted to executive vice president, international, **Viacom Enterprises.** He will continue to oversee Viacom's international sales organisation which has offices in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Latin America.

Maxwell, Berlusconi in French TV talks

TWO NOTABLE outsiders to French television, the Italian Silvio Berlusconi and Robert Maxwell of the UK, are in the process of negotiating an accord which could, once again, transform French television.

As reported in previous issues of TV World, Maxwell has been quietly accumulating shares in the publicly-traded stock of TF-1, France's biggest network. This has allowed him to control a good deal more of the channel's stock than the 12.5 per cent acquired in the spring of 1987 when TF-1 was privatised. For the moment, no one shareholder is allowed to control more than 26 per cent of TF-1's stock: the amount now held by Francis Bouygues, the French construction magnate who operates TF-1.

According to the arrangement now being negotiated with Berlusconi, Maxwell would sell his TF-1 holdings to the Italian, who in turn would sell off his holdings in La Cinq (which he controls jointly with Robert Hersant) to an unspecified buyer – perhaps Maxwell himself. Maxwell has never hidden his dissatisfaction with the way TF-1 is run, and last year tried – unsuccessfully – to take over the Bouygues company. He would like nothing better than to associate himself with another network where he might carry more influence.

TF-1 intention

In the Italian weekly publication, Il Mondo, Berlusconi said he intended to acquire between 10 and 15 per cent of TF-1.

TV World has also learned that as part of the arrangement being negotiated, a third French channel, M-6, a consistent money-loser since its launch, would cease to exist as an independent network and become integrated into La Cinq where it would bolster the musical programming of the predominantly news-based network.

In such a situation, M-6's former frequencies would be made available for another, probably thematic, channel which might also be encrypted. This network could, in the end be awarded to Maxwell in exchange for his releasing his holdings in TF-1. ■

TDF-1 alliances: see p.38

Canadian broadcasting policy set for a shake-up

THREE changes in Canada's broadcasting bosses will have a profound effect on that country's broadcasting policies.

- At the end of January, a new Communications Minister replaced Flora MacDonald who was defeated in the November elections. The "new" minister is in fact, former Communications Minister Marcel Masse.
- The Chairman of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), Andre Bureau, quit on March 1. His successor is yet to be named.
- The seven-year term of the head of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), Pierre Juneau, ends in July.

Rumours about who will replace Juneau are running wild. Among the more serious contenders are Flora MacDonald; former CBC vice-president Petre Herrndorf; the head of Telefilm Canada Pierre DesRoches; producer Patrick Watson; and outgoing CRTC Chairman Andre Bureau.

But it is the re-appointment of Marcel Masse as communications minister that is likely to have the most far-reaching implications. He held the same post in the first half of this decade and set in motion a number of events that he may yet see to completion. He is known to be keen on televised "culture." He was the impetus behind a massive TV project, the Caplan-Savageau Task Force, which led to the drafting of a new broadcasting act. That new act died last year in the federal election; Masse is almost certain to resurrect it.

One of the recommendations in the broadcasting act would directly affect the running of the CBC: the act proposes to split the positions of president and chairman of the board, currently both held by Pierre Juneau, himself a former communications minister and head of the CRTC. ■

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In production

A regular feature of *TV World*. Send details of programmes in, or approaching, production to TV World, 100 Avenue Road, London NW3.

Approaching completion is the filming of **Beyond International's** documentary programme, *The Great Wall of Iron*, a four-hour series about the people's Liberation Army of China.

The programme is a co-production between Beyond and the **Ten** network, both of Australia, and the **BBC**, and includes many 'firsts' including the first filming done inside Mao Tse Tung's tomb.

Beyond's Managing Director Phil Gerlach reported that the series has presold to 10 countries. A number of different versions are being prepared for the international marketplace, as well as a "The Making of..." programme.

The series which will be narrated by Australian actor Jack Thompson, is produced by David Harrison, and directed by Scott Hicks.

The Discovery Network, the US cabler, and Canada's **Groupe Andre Perry Inc.** will co-produce an hour-long special called *The Reluctant Villain: The Wolf*.

The programme will examine all aspects of a wolf's life, including its social organisation, its high intelligence, and its hunting techniques. Groupe Andre Perry will be responsible for the production which will be completed in the late spring.

Taurus is to join in with the production by **LWT** of its series of six two-hour spy movies.

LWT, the UK independent, teamed up with writers Frederick Forsyth and Murray Smith, and their company **FFS Production**, to develop the series. It is being made by FFS Production in association with Taurus and **Blair Communications** of the US. Taurus, in collaboration with the French net **TF-1**, will acquire the European rights (excluding Scandinavia). Blair will distribute the series in North and South America and LWT International will sell to the rest of the world.

The producer of the series is Fred Muller, and the directors are Lawrence Gordon Clark, Gabrielle Beaumont and Tom Clegg.

The latest remake of the *Lassie* stories begins shooting shortly in California, a co-venture between **Palladium Entertainment** and MCA-TV.

The show will be a weekly half-hour series commencing transmission in the autumn, and will be produced by **Al Burton Productions,** with Burton executive producer.

Reteitalia, the Italian producer/distributor, has started making *Magistrate*, a six-hour series co-produced with the **Seven** network of Australia and **TVS** of the UK.

Maryland Public Television (MPT) in the US is in pre-production on *Sea Power: A Global Journey*.

Under William J Lamb's direction scripts will be commissioned for the six-hour series that will trace the impact of sea power on the rise and fall of nations, showing how the sea affects our lives.

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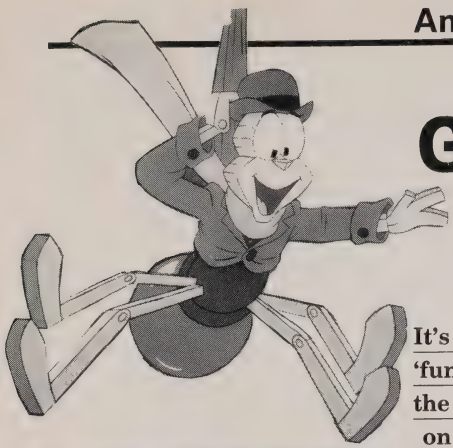
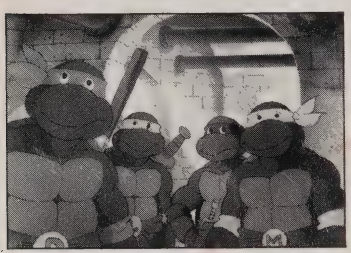
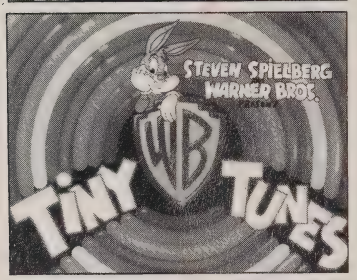


Goodbye hard times, Hello soft 'toons

It's a softer, kinder season for animation in the US as 'funny' and 'friendly' replace 'rough' and 'tumble'. Except in the marketplace, where it's 'life' and 'death' as usual. A report on the 1989-90 children's season by Arnold J. Friedman.





THE PARAMETERS of animation used to be defined as 'full' and 'limited'; now the buzz-words are 'hard' and 'soft'. Hard are action adventure series like the *He Man* and *She Ra Masters Of The Universe* strips with which Group W pioneered the toy-driven cartoon trend literally a handful of years ago.

That's another buzz-word: *toy-driven* refers to series sponsored by toy manufacturers like Mattel, Kenner, Hasbro and others which have backed away from the market. Programmes starring militant toys have been repelling attacks by watchdog groups like Action For Children's Television, and by legislators, who have labeled them 'Thirty Minute Commercials'. Because they say children cannot differentiate between programming and commercial pitches (a characteristic shared with them by many of their parents) sponsors fear that new regulations will seriously alter the environment in which their messages are traditionally delivered.

It's been a short tradition. Group W, which kicked off the trend in 1983, is riding the crest of a new wave with a 'softer' series scheduled for a September start, called *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. It's a runaway sales success – if the term can apply to tortoises. The series is almost a spoof of the earlier genre, blending high adventure, science fiction and humour that seems to span a wide demographic range for a cartoon. Is it militant? Apparantly only the shells are hard to protect the turtles.

Animation is by Murakami Wolf Swenson, a Hollywood-based company, and not by Filmation, recently sold by Group W to a French production company still unidentified at press time. It may be L'Oreal, the Paris-based cosmetics firm with which Group W has been most involved since it first decided to sell off Filmation about six months ago.

Pending the new owner's assessment of another soft series, *Bugzburg* may or may not continue to be produced. Although it has been reported in other publications that the 65-episode project is already one-third complete, a source at Group W says that does not mean any of it is actually on film. At last count, *Bugzburg* had been cleared in slightly more of the country than *Turtles* (72 per cent). Group W's hard animation, including *BraveStarr*, which suffered because of heavy competition and the changing climate, will go to the new owners but it is not definite yet if Filmation's dynamic executive VP Alice Donenfeld goes too, although it is understood the offer was extended to her and to VP/Licensing Gail Munn. President Lou Scheimer is of course part of the deal.

Among the few new animated strips to debut this fall, *Police Academy: The Series* is the LBS answer to *Police Academy, The Movies.* This fall, the sixth *Police Academy* feature will be released theatrically, at approximately the same time a second *Ghostbusters* movie opens in theatres. The cross-promotion is expected to help launch the television season for the animated versions – both of which are syndicated by LBS.

The company is heavy in the children's business, with a big inventory that has served it well. This season it is adding 34 fresh episodes to the *Real Ghostbusters* series for a total of 99. For the launch of *Police Academy,* they are providing stations with 30-second public service announcements that offer se-

continued on p14 ►

From top: 'Bugzburg', 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles'; 'Tiny Tunes'; 'Punky Brewster'.

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Goodbye hard times

► continued from p12

rious advice delivered by the cartoon cops, including spots on safety, drugs, running away from home and other messages relevant to the 9 to 15 year-old audience anticipated for the half-hours. The announcements can be used anywhere in the schedule at the programme director's option.

Like the live action movies, *Police Academy: The Series* is somewhere between hard and soft, with the same sight gags and lunacy. Nobody bleeds or gets killed; it's not about space and robots – and the police use hi-tech equipment like glue-guns, not real guns. All the same, it *is* cops and robbers and in order to skew older, with young-teen appeal, its cartoon characters can expect to be knocked about a bit.

According to Mike Weiden, president of TV Horizons, the LBS barter division, "The kids' dollar is more competitive than ever before, but if you have the product that speaks to that market it's still a very good business to be in."

So far, *Police Academy* has cleared 82 per cent of the country, attributable in part to the *Movie Toons* "block-of-programming" marketing strategy that is the style this season. Although the word *block* suggests block-booking (a definite legal no-no) the concept is gaining wider acceptance. Disney is doing it with a two hour block called *Disney Afternoon;* the Warner Bros. block is still a mystery, and Worldvision continues to clear a two hour block called *The Funtatic World Of Hanna-Barbara.* Claster's block is a package of three half hours that stations may rotate – so that's when a block is not a block. It takes its name from one of the strips, *Maxie's World,* and includes in addition *Beverly Hills Teens* and *Punky Brewster.*

Punky Brewster and another Claster strip, *The New Archies,* are products of Dic Enterprises and Saban Productions, the latter originally a supplier of music to television. In the five years since Saban entered the children's market it has established a considerable track record: *Alf* and *Kissyfur* are on NBC-TV; *Noozles* is seen on Nickelodeon cable and *Tom Sawyer* is on HBO. In addition, said executive vice president Robert Unkel, Saban and Dic have development deals with all three networks for the 1989-90 season.

Like Weiden, Unkel achnowledges a tight children's market. "It has become enormously difficult to distribute (animation)," he said, referring to his US$13-15 million costs for 65 episodes. "The networks require only 13 episodes – but demand a higher quality of animation. There is no set rule for a specific level of cels," he explained, adding "But they want a better style and higher quality. Spielberg probably spends much more for network (animation) than what he allocates for a syndicated strip. Only a couple in the next few years will strip," he said, offering Spielberg and Disney as examples.

Commenting on the enthusiastic reception of Group W's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles,* Unkel said the enthusiasm would probably not last. He speaks from amidst a heavy catalogue of children's programming which Saban distributes worldwide. But Group W sources point to two separate lines of *Ninja* comic books and other licensed products, plus the company's own track record, as evidence that most of this country's programme buyers have not guessed wrong.

The Steven Spielberg strip to which Unkel referred isn't set to debut until the fall of 1990 – although it's already cleared in over 80 US markets, including all of the top ten. When it gets here it will be a new generation of Warner Bros. *Looney Tunes* "inspired by" the classic antics of the old gang, which includes Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig, Road Runner and Daffy Duck, who was probably the looniest "toon" on the Warners lot. Considering the recent merger of Warner Communications and Time Inc. the Warner-Spielberg venture called *Tiny Tunes* is certain to be widely promoted, an example of media hype *par excellence.*

Buena Vista's *Disney Afternoon,* trading on the magic Disney name, includes *Duck Tales, Tale Spin; Gummi Bears* and *Chip 'n' Dale's Rescue Rangers.* The strips come with and without a wraparound package: an encouragement for stations to programme it as a two hour block. If Saban's Unkel thinks US$15 million per strip is a lot to recoup, let him consider Buena Vista's claim that *Tale Spin* will cost twice that.

In the mean time, Worldvision has reconsidered plans to release a new series of *Huckleberry Hound* softies, preferring to wait and see how all the other soft animation sorts itself out, said Sr. VP Domestic Sales Randall C. Hanson. He can afford to sit out this season, since Worldvision syndicates the longest list of animation adn is the leading producer of animated programming, through its subsidiaries Hanna-Barbera and Ruby-Spears. Their celebrated cartoons are classically soft, but Hansen doesn't use that word. He perfers 'funny', which he says is a much more positive and, in his opinion, less misleading description of the product.

HARD toy-driven action/adventure strips aren't the only ones in the way of the soft-toons. Legislation affecting commercial time on all children's programming is expected to be passed and in effect by the fall of 1990, which means programmes with more than six minutes of advertising time will have to cut back. This poses a problem for stations with barter contracts, if the programmes are edited for six and a half minutes. The extra half minute, which may have been given to the station as its share of the barter split, will have to come out of the station's share.

The hard line about soft animation is that a deal is a deal and the half minute is not the sydicator's loss. Some producers will increase the amount of programming to fill the spot left vacant, but this in turn increases production costs and somebody has to pay for them. It's a new situation and, as with all negotiations, it will resolve itself in the marketplace, where stations and syndicators tough it out with each other until somebody backs down. ■

Network Animation
The top shows on Saturday mornings for NBC, CBS and ABC

(Saturday February 25, 1989)

		Average audience (per cent) Children under 12
1. The Bugs Bunny & Tweety Pie Show	ABC	15.1
2. Muppet Babies	CBS	15.0
3. Pee Wee's Playhouse	CBS	14.4
4. Garfield And Friends		
5. Alvin And The Chipmunks	CBS	13.9
6. Slimer!		
7. A Pup Named Scooby Doo	NBC	12.6
8. Smurfs	ABC	12.3
Winnie the pooh	ABC	11.8
10. ALF		
	NBC	11.1
	ABC	11.1
	NBC	9.8

Source: A.C Nielsen

The Flintstones appear in 'The Wonderful World of Hanna Barbera'.

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A buyers' market

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Classics catch the kiddie market in France

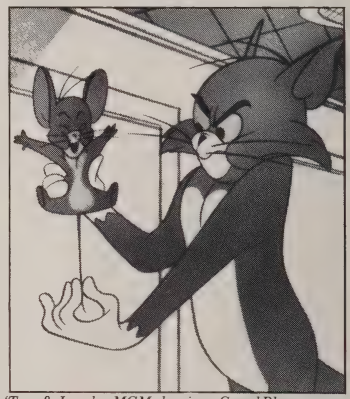
With *Ca cartoone*, Canal + has another hit on its hands. And just to demonstrate that the French pay TV can get away with anything, they've sold 30-50 year-old cartoons to that most fashion-conscious of audiences, children.

In February 1986, Canal Plus's head of programming, Albert Mathieu, needed a non-scrambled family-orientated programme for the Sunday slot, to bridge the gap between the end of the 18.00 movie and the start of the 18.30 movie. *Ca cartoone* was born on the correct assumption that old Hollywood cartoons are the kind the parents want their children to watch. The show started with old Warner cartoons, hosted by former weatherman Philippe Dana in various cartoonish settings. Today about 70 per cent of Canal Plus subscribers watch *Ca cartoone* on Sunday nights (which translates as 4 per cent of the total French TV-viewing audience). Ever since it started, the show had no difficulties finding sponsors (presently Benco, a chocolate drink) or advertisers, as the children who watch the show are those of the affluent city dwellers who form the bulk of Canal Plus subscribers.

Since September 1988, the show is also aired on weekdays (15 minutes at 18.30) when it reaches 2 per cent of the total audience. Its diet has been enriched by the addition of 119 *Tom and Jerry* MGM cartoons, sold by Turner, so that now Philippe Dana, who does the programming can rely on a library of about 350 cartoons from Warner and Turner, on which Canal Plus has a one to two-year exclusivity for six airings.

Cuban cartoons in Bavaria

BAYERISCHER Rundfunk's Sasa Lazzeroni is buyer for the monthly humour programme *Kanal Fatale*, seen on the last Friday of the month at the adult viewing time of 21.45 on the network's regional channel BR3. The programme uses short animation clips of from 20 seconds to about 4 and a half minutes, mixed in with other material, *writes Bill Patterson.*



'Tom & Jerry' — MGM classic on Canal Plus

Finding animation to suit the show is not easy, so Frau Lazeroni was overjoyed to discover a series at the Cuban stand at Mipcom which exactly fits her needs. *Cuban Comics* was love at first sight.

"I knew immediately it would work for us," she told *TV World*. "The animation was very artistic from the point of view of the drawing and also of the content. I only buy things to laugh at and I was surprised how funny it was as far as I'm concerned. The humour was astoundingly international. It was exactly my sense of humour."

After choosing 20 prime minutes from the 40 minute series, Frau Lazzeroni made arrangements for the purchase, which ran through a Munich production company who had made the initial contact with the Cubans. The deal took about four months to come to completion. She would not comment on the purchase price.

Lazeroni is a member of a four-person team responsible for putting together the show, which has been carried for about three years on BR3. About a third of the 45-minute programme she would like to see. "I'm interested in anything that's funny," she said. ■

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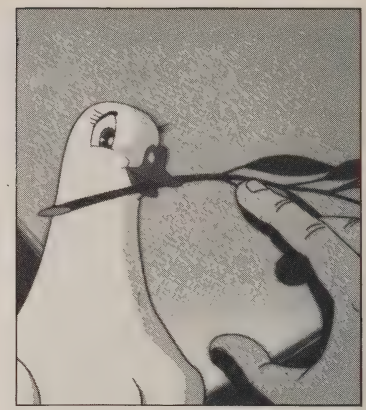
Science fiction or 'good old days'

With Japan in the middle of a nostalgia boom, TV stations are finding that sci-fi cartoons are losing viewers to gentler themes. Roger March reports



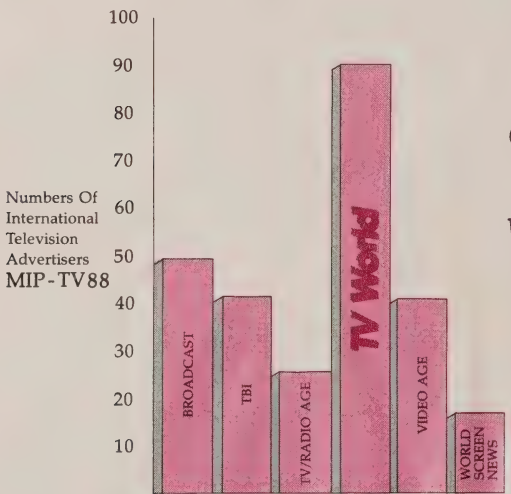
NTV's "In The Beginning": an animated exploration of The Old Testament. Another success for the 'soft' movement.

SINCE the death of Emperor Hirohito earlier this year, Japan has been gripped with nostalgia. A yearning for "the old days" is probably just a fashion, a fad that will pass, but for the moment it is having a profound effect — not least the nation's appreciation of TV.

In the past year tastes in animated programmes have undergone a change, away from the science-fiction/space adventure cartoons, and towards lighter themes. It is a movement that is appearing elsewhere in the world, as 'hard' animation has given way to 'soft'.

Hirohumi Kojima of Ido International says "Robots are out. The nostalgia boom sweeping Japan has touched the animation industry as well." Certainly, robot special effects stories such as *Gundan* and the notoriously violent stories of *Ken, the Bear Fist* no longer appear in the top ten.

Now, the most popular animation is a remake of *Osomatsu-kun* (the name of the leading character), a comedy series about six eccentric brothers (rating 24.6 per cent) This is followed by *Sazae-san* (23.4 per cent), now numbering over 1000 shows, which describes the everyday family life of a young bride nicknamed Sazae who is very friendly and warm-hearted, if a little careless. Such is its popularity, there is now a Sazae-san Museum in Tokyo for diehard fans. The third most popular animation is a repeat of the original *Sazae-san* series (19.7). On the fourth rung is the long-running *Old Japanese Folktales* (19.0 per cent), much of whose popularity can be attributed to the eccentric narrations by famous actors and actresses. Fifth is *Doraemon* (18.7), a story of a



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magical cat who can speak the language of humans. The sixth, *Dragon Ball* (17.6 per cent), is based on an old Chinese adventure story.

Other series include *Himitsuno Akko-chan* ("The Secret Girl Akko"), which portrays a young girl who can transform herself into a different person or animal by whispering secret words into her mirror. This film has won a wide following among children, not to mention parents who see in Akko-chan the dreams of their childhood.

Other popular series are *Oishinbo*, an animated spin-off from the boom in cooking and gourmet programmes that seem to saturate Japanese day and night-time television; it's the story of a couple in pursuit of the ultimate dinner. Another interesting animation is *Obocchama-kun* (A Son In A High Society), now riding the wave of upward mobility in Japan.

Traditional story

One production company that refuses to alter its programme content to suit latest fads is Nippon Animation, a highly respected production house that has been specialising in children's masterpieces from around the world for more than fifteen years. According to Junzo Nakashima of Nippon Animation, since children these days have little time to read books "we want to provide the literary masterpieces in film form". Nippon Animation's *Jungle Book*, a co-production with Italy and Switzerland, will be screened this fall.

Nippon Animation's attitude toward animation production coincides with the current overseas trend toward soft programmes. But does it translate into more sales of Japanese animation? Koichi Sekizaki of Fuji Eight, subsidiary of Fuji Television, Japan's largest commercial network, believes there is a big gap between Japanese and foreign taste when it comes to animation. Only *Maisin Ikkoku*, the story of a beautiful widow who runs an apartment house of strange boarders, and *Lamu the Invader Girl* the adventures of a girl from outer space, were popular when screened in France last year.

Toei Animation boasts of selling Japanese animation films to countries in every corner of the world except the Eastern block. Yukio Hayashi, chief of its International Department, said his company's overseas business especially in the European market, has been boosted by privatisation of French television and the establishment of five independent French broadcasting stations. Toei has sold *Dragon Ball* to France's TF1 and *Love in Rock'n Roll* to Reteitallia in Italy. Similar to Fuji's Sekizaki, Hayashi said that Toei will consider the tastes of foreign viewers when planning future productions. Toei is also eager to obtain merchandising rights and royalities of TV-game software and videos to cover costs. ■

Animation and the Japanese 'godfather'

MANY years ago a young and aspiring Japanese animator smuggled a sketch-book into a film theatre showing Disney's *Bambi*. He repeated this about eighty times, until he felt he had mastered the wondrous animation techniques on display. When that man died recently, in Japan his death was mourned nationally.

He was Osamu Tezuka, the godfather of the post-war Japanese animation world, and often referred to as the "Walt Disney of the Orient". Tezuka debuted in 1946, and through his remarkable life produced a total of 400 cartoon books that sold over 100 million copies. He is best known for *Astroboy* (1963), Japan's first TV animation series which regularly rated 30 per cent. It was the first Japanese animation ever shown in the US when it premiered on the NBC network in 1963. *Astroboy* was eventually sold to dozens of countries around the world. Tezuka's animation works span such universal themes as ecological conservation; the joy of life; the dangers of 'a science-is-everything' society; and peace and pacifism. His last work, in when he died, is called *Blue Blink*, a story about a boy with supernatural powers who travels by pony in search of his lost father. It will be screened from this April on public broadcaster NHK.

Nippon Television Network Corporation (NTV) is now producing Tezuka's *In the Beginning* (left), a television series based on the Old Testament, in co-operation with RAI, the Italian national broadcaster. An English version will be completed this autumn. Meanwhile, TV Asahi is planning to broadcast one of Tezuka's masterpieces, *Kimba: The White Lion*, on television for the first time. ■

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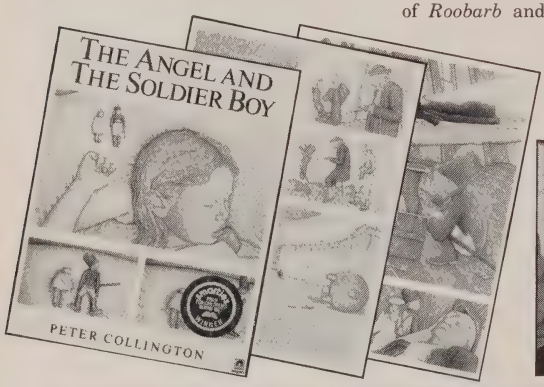
Animation and music: toons with tunes

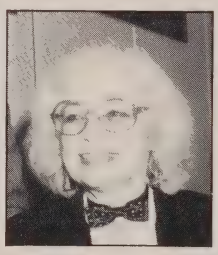
The British animation industry is cartooning hard to meet demand. Roy Glenheath looks at a film now being made in London with strong musical back-up.

IT WAS Raymond Briggs's *The Snowman* that did it. Or perhaps it was *Who Framed Roger Rabbit,* which was largely made in the UK. Or perhaps it was all going to happen anyway, in that cyclical way that television has.

But whatever the cause, the result is that the animation industry in the UK has rarely been in better health. At least three television features are now in production, as well as a number of shorts. Animation directors report difficulty in filling positions owing to the increased amount of work.

British animators have long regarded themselves as a type apart from the rest of the world: they have never been keen on the "hard" animation favoured by the US and Far East; nor have they entered the merchandising market with the same gusto as their American counterparts. The results have been cartoon programmes that are peculiarly British, but with worldwide appeal: the dry wit of FilmFair's *Paddington,* achieved with limited animation; the originality of *Roobarb* and *Henry's Cat* by Bob Godfrey...the list is virtually endless.





Bringing the book (left) to life: Alison de Vere (below).

It will be added to in November by a new animated feature from Grasshopper Productions of London, in conjunction with BMG Records (UK) Ltd. *The Angel And The Soldier Boy* is based on the children's Book of the same title, which won the Smarties Children's book Of The Year award in 1987 and sold well in the UK and US.

Scheduled for a Christmas 1989 screening on BBC-1, following a pre-sale deal between the BBC and the music company BMG, the 25-minute cartoon has no dialogue. The musical backing track is by the Irish group Clannad — well-known for TV theme work — and will be released separately as a record and cassette tape, in much the same way as the music from *The Snowman.*

From a cramped studio above an empty shop in London's fashionable Kensington, director Alison de Vere co-ordinates the develpment of the story into a moving film. The tale is about two toys that come to life and have a battle with storybook pirates.

It's a charming story, and thanks to the wordless soundtrack, is ideally suited to the international market. "But I'll bet when we've finished, someone will say 'I wish you had words on it,' " jokes de Vere.

Particular difficulty was being had with a scene wherein a model ship atop a piano leaves its stand and sails into a painted seascape handing on the wall behind it. A storm scene later may last around two minutes, but will take "maybe two months" to animate, according Ramon Modiano, a senior animator on the project, with a book of Turner's seascapes open on his desk for guidance. The original story has been lengthened to make it last 25 minutes.

BMG, the record company which is a division of the mighty Bertelsman empire, sees the film more in terms of a promotional vehicle for the Clannad music.

Say de Vere, "BMG saw *The Snowman* and decided that the soundtrack of the *Angel And The Soldier Boy* would be aimed similarly, that is at the children's cassette market."

De Vere's company, Black Dog Productions, was comissioned by Grasshopper to make the film, and has have a temporary staff of around 25, including animators, trace and paint artists and camera operators. The final cost is likely to be around £500,000 (US$875,000). International sales will be handled by Telso International. ■

The best of the rest

COSGROVE Hall, the wholly-owned animation subsidiary of Thames Television, has completed its feature film *BFG: The Big, Friendly Giant.* The 90-minute full animation film is based on the top-selling children's book of the same name by Roald Dahl, with voice-overs by popular British actors.

A spokeswoman for Cosgrove Hall (producer of *The Wind In The Willows)* said that the film was destined for a theatrical release prior to being seen on television, but that a distributor had not yet been decided. International sales of the title will be handled by Thames Television International.

FILMFAIR, the London-based animator famous for *The Wombles* and *Paddington Bear,* is now in production on a new puppet animation series called *Huxley Pig.* The 13 x 10-minute episodes have been commissioned by Central Television and will be transmitted on the ITV network in June.

And work has started on *Nellie the Elephant,* a 30 x 5-minute series about the famous pachyderm to be seen on ITV next January. It is produced and directed by Terry Ward (responsible for *The Mister Men)* and tells the story of Nellie's attempts to return to jungle. ■

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Animation shorts

● ROLF Harris, the Australian artist and entetainer (right) has been signed by Portman Entertainment and HTV of the UK to make *Rolf's Cartoon Club*. He was previously with the BBC making *Cartoon Time*, a programme on which *Rolf's Cartoon Club* is based. In it, Harris introduced clips from classic animated shorts and features, and drew the characters himself on a large easel. Victor Glynn, Portman's director of production said that the new series, to be networked on ITV, will also "aim to show young viewers something of how movie magic is created".

● BANDAI Animation of Japan is to release six new animated series this year. Next month comes the release of the new Gundam series (6 × 30 mins.) to follow the 150 episodes aired in the last 10 years. Also a theatrical version of the successful *Palatbor* series; six episodes of *Star Ship Trooper*; plus two sports cartoons, take from comic books: *Beat Shot* about a young golfer, and BB about a young boxer.

● HANNA-Barbera, the US animation outfit, has taken an option on the BBC's live-action children's drama *Grange Hill*. The BBC series was controversial when it first appeared in 1980, for its frank treatment of life in a modern London school.

● A NEW TV distribution company in the UK, Bratpack, is to specialise in children's and animated material. Headed by Maya Kemp, who was formerly at FilmFair, the company's first presentation is *Puppy Dog Tales*, 13 10-minute films scheduled for an ITV screening in September. Bratpack's catalgue also includes *The Mister Men* and Edid Blyton's *Noddy*.

● ITALIAN state broadcaster RAI flies Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera to Italy this month for a 50th Anniversary tribute set to air March 26. In the mean time, Hanna and Barbera are negotiating for a deal to produce a theatrical feature film starring their beloved *Flintstones* — to commemorate Fred and Wilma's 30th Anniversary, next year. ■

Cartoon time in C

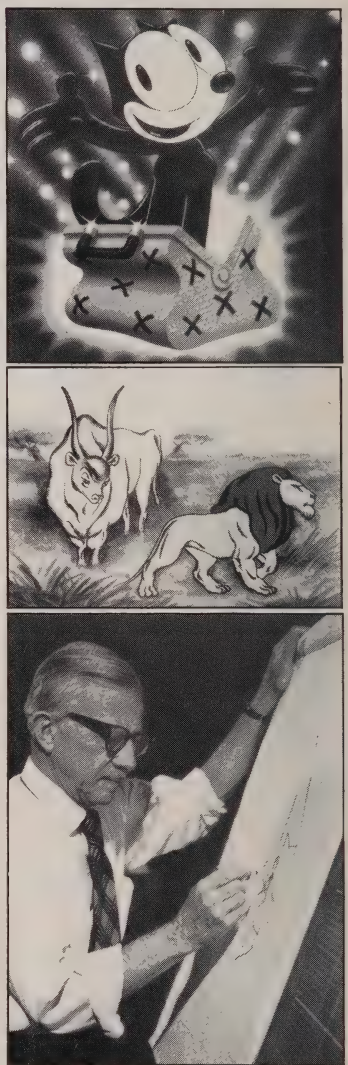
The Los Angeles International Animation Celebration is the world, showcasing both classic and contemporary internati tion for more than 800 animated works from 35 countri

THE FIRST Animation Celebration was a dream come true for Festival Chairman Terry Thoren when he launched the project in 1985. There had never been a major international animation festival in the US before that time. Yes, there were festivals taking place in Annency, France; Hiroshima; Ottawa; Varna, Bulgaria; Zagreb, Yugoslavia, and London, but not in the US. This year celebrating its third birthday, The Los Angeles International Animation Celebration, no longer a toddler, is proudly marching forth.

The event took place January 26 — February 3. With its under the tent opening party, a World Premiere of *Felix The Cat — The Movie,* attracted the cartoon-hungry of all ages, while a second full-length premiere from Japan, *Robert Carnival,* played to those who wanted really to feast their eyes.

Also featured during the nine days were new animation from Great Britain, the Soviet Union, The People's Republic of China, Estonia, Scandinavia, Yugoslavia and Belgium, as well as special salutes, including one to the National Film Board of Canada on its 50th Anniversary.

Soviet Animator, Fedor Khitruk, brought along a new collection of animation from throughout the Soviet Union to the event. Soviet animation dates back to 1924 with the making of *Soviet Toys* by the famous film pioneer Dziga Vertov. The government used cinema as propaganda and the early films dealt heavily with political themes. The mood became more conservative in the 1930s when Soyuzmultfilm was founded in 1936. It was there that most of the Soviet animated films were made, switching to children's stories and folk tales and legends. The 1960s brought sharp criticism and many of the films made during that period were shelved and are only now being released. With the influence of *glasnost,* Soviet animation has begun to broaden horizons. Science fiction, fantasy, literature and adult themes are acceptable; a whole new generation of animators is beginning to receive attention at international film festivals and at present there is a very active participation in this form of film making.



(Top) Felix the Cat; (centre) Fedor Khitruk's animation; (above) famed animator Art Babbit.

Chinese animation is of great import-

alifornia

gest animation festival in the l animation – and a competi- Harriet Robbins was there.

ance both for its melding of the traditional Chinese art styles, such as dry-brush and watercolour, puppet films, and animation developed from paper cutouts and folding. Their animation reflects both the national character and the unique style of Chinese art. China's modern animation industry began in 1947 in Xinshan — then came a decade of upheaval (1966-1976) when the animation industry virtually collapsed. In 1976 they started back into animation and in the last few years have achieved what can be described as truly an art form. There is the "paintings come to life" of Shanghai school which is indeed national and a reflection of both the Chinese mentality and its indigenous use of painting, puppetry, and paper-art modes.

Also well-represented was new British animation where today's subject matter can range from child abuse to meditations on death. In Britain, studio output is aimed at TV — commercials, music videos or shorts. Studios often subsidise their short film production with profits from commercials. This affords filmmakers a freedom over style and content. Puppet animation has developed rapidly at the Aardman Studios in Bristol. Then there are the surreal works of the Brothers Quay with their experimentation in three-dimensional illustrations.

There were also special shows such as MTV's *Animated Rock,* ILM's exciting behind-the-scenes look into the making of *Roger Rabbit,* and a look at *New Computer Animation,* featuring works of Pacific Data Images, Pixar and DeGraf/Wahrman. Two other well-attended programmes were *The Business Of Animation: A Global Perspective,* where an unprecedented gathering of studio heads from around the world presented an analysis of the dynamic and rapidly expanding world marketplace for animation. *How To Survive In The Animation Business* provided strategies for animators to survive "without getting eaten alive".■

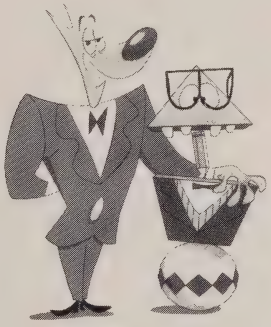
● The Fourth Los Angeles International Animation Celebration is in its planning stages. Call (213) 312 6630.

Animation awards

Corporate sponsorship by a respectable number of businesses helped the prizes awarded in the competition. Juries of animation experts from all areas of industry presented nearly US$100,000 in cash prizes and awards to the following winners:

Grand Prize: Best Film Of The Festival — *Welcome* (Dobro Pozhalovat) (USSR) Alexei Karayev.

First Work Intended For Public Exhibition — *The Cat Came Back*(Canada), Cordell Barker; 2nd prize: *Clothes* (UK), Osbert Parker.



Animation Produced For Promotional Purposes — *Mickey's Nightmare* (USA) Carl Willat/ Colossal Pictures; 2nd prize: *Top of the Hour: Compartment M* (USA), Henry Selick/MTV: Music Television Network.

Animation Produced For Children (Sponsored by Amblin Entertainment) — *Welcome* (Dobro Pozhalovat) (USSR), Alexei Karayev; 2nd prize: *Morris Goes To School* (USA), John Matthews.

Animation Produced For Television — *Meet The Raisins* (USA) Barry Bruce/Will Vinton Productions; 2nd prize: *The Simpsons* (USA), Gabor Csupo/Klasky-Csupo Inc., Matt Groening/ Gracie Films.

Experimental Animation — *Tugging the Worm* (USA), James Duesing; 2nd prize: *Rehearsals for Extinct Anatomies* (UK), Brothers Quay.

Computer Assisted Animation — *Tin Toy* (USA), John Lasseter/Pixar; 2nd prize: *Technological Threat* (USA), Bill Kroyer/Kroyer Films.

Commodore Amiga Award For Computer-Animated Student Film — *Beat Dedication* (USA), Bob Sabiston.

Animation Produced For Educational Purposes — *Dreams Of A Land* (Canada), Robert Doucet; 2nd prize: *Mr Dick* (Snoppen) (Sweden), Stig Bergqvist/Filmtecknarna AB.

Animated Works Shorter Than 5 Minutes — *Picnic* (UK), Paul Vester/Speedy Films; 2nd prize: *Twenty Ways to Quit Smoking* (USA), Bill Plymton.

Animated Works Between 5-15 minutes — *Vykrutasy* (USSR), Garri Bardin; 2nd prize: *Curriculum Vitae* (Czechoslovakia), Pavel Koutsky.

Animated Works Between 15-30 Minutes — *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (USA), Stephen Johnson; 2nd prize: *The Web* (UK), Joan Ashworth.

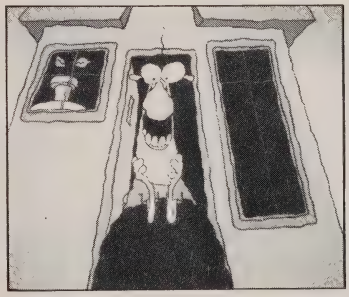
Animation Works Over 30 Minutes — *When The Wind Blows* (UK), John Coates/TVC London; No 2nd prize.

Los Angeles Film Critics Award (Sponsored by the Eastman Kodak Co.) (tie): *Vykrutasy* (USSR), Gerri Bardin, and *The Cat Came Back* (Canada), Cordell Barker.

Bob Clampett Scholarships (Sponsored by the Bob Clampett Foundation) — *Corporate Blues* (Canada), Greg Bauman; *Clothes* (UK), Osbert Parker.

American Independent Animation Award (Sponsored by Paul Bartel) — *Preludes In A Magical Time* (USA), Sara Petty.

Commodore Amiga Collegiate Animation Competition — Best Demonstration Reel: UCLA Animation Workshop; Animation Artwork: Rhode Island School of Design; Special Jury Award for Extraordinary Achievement: Rowland High School.



MTV Station I.D. Competition — *White Lion* (USA), Eric Darnell; 2nd prize: *Music For The Eyes* (USA), Mark Conhan; 3rd prize: *Noodle Ear* (USA), Bill Plympton; Runners up: *Angel* (UK), Miles Flanagan; *Bogart* (UK), Charlie Fletcher-Wats; *Emancipation* (USA), Nick Jennings & Joe Graham; *Mission No.1* (UK), Mark Allen Slater; *Monster Trap* (USA), Sheila Sofian; *MRV — It's A Blast* (USA), Gordon Glove; *Shed The Jungle, Shun The Cow* (USA), Joe Murray.

Worldwide worries, Canada's concern

With so much pressure being put on companies to "go international," many are doing just that. But in the high-cost, high-risk world of animation, at least one Canadian company has found the international business full of dangers. Daphne Lavers reports.

"Beetlejuice": Nelvana grosses out.

THE CANADIAN animation market is in an unsettled state this year, but there is little agreement on either the cause or the effects of the unease. But one inescapable conclusion must be recognition of the global inter-relationships which have been forged throughout this decade.

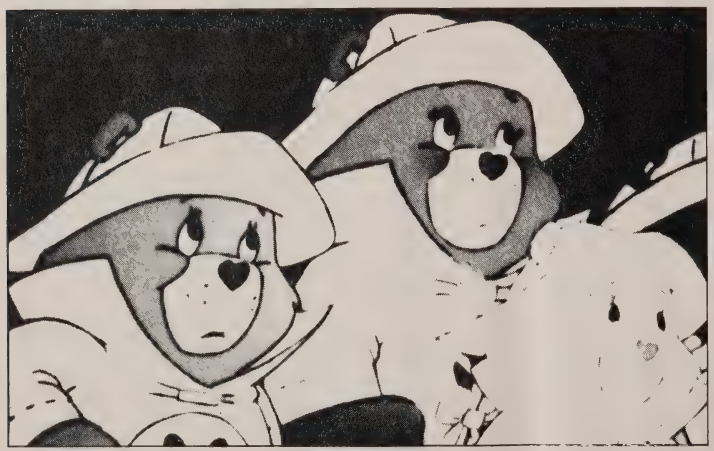
While those inter-relationships have contributed to both the globalisation and expansion of television, the pay-offs can be either rewarding or ruinous for the companies involved. For at least one Canadian animation company, the pay-offs are uncomfortably close to disaster.

Canada's oldest film/animation house, Crawley Films of Ottawa, has found itself in deep financial trouble this year. It is ironic that Crawley's, like the National Film Board of Canada (see page ??), is also celebrating its 50th year of operations in 1989.

"We thought the problems would be quickly resolved," said Crawley president Bill Stevens, "so we went on to other productions. The problems were not resolved so we stopped those other productions and at this moment, our own studio is virtually empty."

Unfortunately for Crawley, the financial problems were not of its own making. Montreal-based Via La Monde had cut a deal with the French animation firm Belokapei for 26 half hours of a new animation series called *Ys La Magnifique*. Crawley's part in all this was a Ca$2.7 million (US$2.3 million) service contract for the animation. Belokapei went bankrupt, and Crawley is left with 10 completed episodes.

Further, the problems in France which created problems in Canada had a domino effect on Crawley because the *Ys* production was involved with loans from Telefilm Canada which put other Crawley projects on ice. Telefilm (the Canadian government agency which supports the TV and film industry) has reportedly been in to audit Crawley's books, but Telefilm, naturally, is reluctant to discuss such internal activities, especially so close to the April 1 Telefilm budget deadline.



Nelvana's "Care Bears" to the rescue.

Canadian input

Peter Katadotis, head of English production at Telefilm Canada, said animation can access either the Broadcast or Feature Film Fund, and Telefilm has one application on file now for a feature film.

"It's labour-intensive and there aren't too many done," said Katadotis. "We would insist that most of the work be done in Canada and that's a problem." Substantial Canadian participation is essential for a project to get Telefilm support.

Where animation work is done appears to be a problem for more countries than just Canada, particularly with off-shore animation houses picking up much of the labour-intensive "in-betweening" processes. It was suggested that moves to take the *Ys* in-betweening offshore was part of the problem in France.

In Canada, the federal regulator, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) changed the rules on animation just last year, to take into account precisely where the major portion of work is done, in order to calculate Canadian content.

portion of work is done, in order to calculate Canadian content.

Animation policy

The Commission guidelines on animation sets up a new "points system" which includes: one point each for a Canadian director, scriptwriter, and storyboard supervisor, first or second voice, design supervisor, layout and background, key animation, assistant animation or in-betweening, camera operator, music composer and editor. To qualify as a Canadian programme, a minimum of six points is required and the key animation must be done in Canada.

Yet despite this assistance, cartoons are still high-cost productions.

What Katadotis calls the non-theatrical animation market – the market for shorts generally shown in movie theatres prior to the main feature – "that market collapsed in Canada and the US as well," Katadotis noted. In fact, this market in some North American theatres has been replaced by paid, commercial advertising prior to the feature film – a movie which has raised the ire of theatre-goers considerably. That market has changed to primarily educational and festival venues, Katadotis continued, while the theatrical market of television and feature films has seen much of the actual work going overseas, mostly to Korea.

"Canada actually has a reputation for children's programming," Katadotis continued, "not only for children's programming but for animation as well. It's almost a Canadian niche.

"I think one of the reasons Canadian productions are so popular is because of the difference," he said. "Our stuff tends to be less violent, less sexist and, by the way, usually more racially-integrated as well ... . There are certain other cultural differences in terms of the kind of characters . . . and one other point is, there is also an ecological sensitivity (in Canadian productions)."

Canada is now a world leader in animation. According to Michael Hirsch one of three top executives at Toronto's Nelvana Production. "I think we've recreated the family viewing period – recreated or rediscovered an audience, perhaps a lost art form," with Nelvana's productions such as *Care Bears* and *Babar* running in prime time.

For Hirsch, the key is infrastructure – most specifically, management and administrative infrastructure necessary for a company with "a couple of hundred employees" which allows sufficient expertise to enter the field safely as an international player.

Nelvana was slow and cautious in entering into the co-production field, joining in after 17 years in business with its *Babar* series, with Ellipse and the Paris-based Brizzi Brothers. That caution in co-production is a reflection also of Nelvana's determination to sell directly to the US networks, and to keep Nelvana's control over such productions as *Care Bears* and *My Pet Monster*.

In terms of current production, Nelvana is entering into the second series of *Babar* – episodes 14 to 26, and a feature film for summer release – only the fifth animated motion picture Nelvana has done. In co-production with Ellipse, Nelvana is working on a series based on "The Little Tramp" character of Charlie Chaplin, for the 1990 season, and for Warner Brothers, a 13-episode series on *Beetlejuice*, (based on the movie) with a "state-of-the-art,

continued on p27 ►

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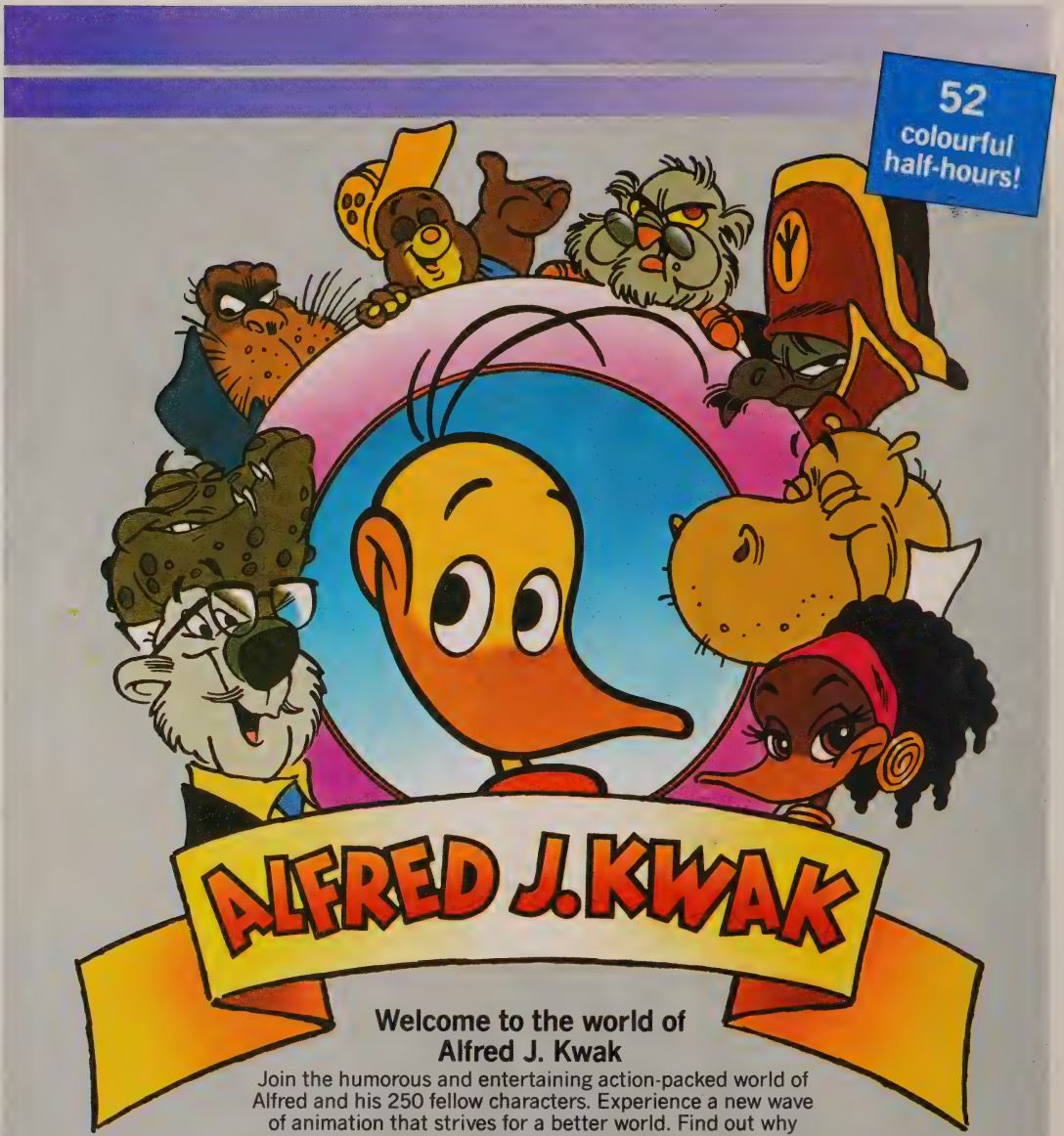

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Worldwide Worries

► continued from p25

brand-new look" in animation that Hirsch is rather mysterious about. Nelvana has entered that realm of children's programming called "grossout," with *My Pet Monster,* and the Beetlejuice series will be in the same genre, with the added attraction – details unspecified – of being a "mixed media production."

For Nelvana, a long-term strategy includes "video publishing," licensing properties but on a long-term basis, and creating a library of classics, but not public domain classics. The value is in long-term properties, Hirsch asserted.

Crawley's Stevens sees the market somewhat differently. On a global basis, Stevens feels there's never been the volume of animation currently on the market, and he sees broadcasters stockpiling programming. However, the toy-associated programming is difficult to stockpile, because of all the related marketing activity. Stevens predicts a backlash both among the toy companies and adult lobby groups who dislike toy-driven animation. And fragmentation – or fractioning of the market – is taking place particularly in those areas served by the new people-meter ratings technology. If toddlers can't push the buttons to register their viewing or presence, they tend to fall off the scale. And that could mean eventually, off the screens.

The animation market – as other markets – is changing substantially with rationalisation taking place on a global basis. The market in Canada has changed rapidly, with government subsidies and support moving the industry into an era of huge projects.

It's a quantum leap for Canadians. These are "mega-projects," big series, big mini-series, and big features, and government support is helping to achieve them. "But do we really have the infrastructure to support it?" questions Stevens. "I don't think the industry does".

But Crawley does, and Stevens intends to trade on that company infrastructure to ensure the company's survival. He may sell company assets such as the sound studio, the lab, editing equipment, and probably the building that houses Crawley films.

"We're just going to do what everybody else does, instead of trying to beat the status quo by being an absolutely self-contained film empire." Stevens has spent 16 years with Crawley Films, and while he is in negotiation with potential partners, selling the company isn't an option.

Crawley still has a number of projects in the works; production is scheduled to resume shortly on *The Ugly Duckling* and on four television *Mouse Sports* specials – from Tales of the Mouse Hockey League. And TV station CJOH is currently finishing post-production on the *Denim Blue* series, which Crawley did with Richard Cooper Productions. In development are three live action feature films, one of which should be in production by spring.

Someone half-joked to Bill Stevens, "What's it like managing a national trust without government funding?" – a comment only half-humourous in light of the 50-year-old company's current problems.

"Watch," Stevens says. "Just watch. Give us time. There are options available to us." But will Stevens find them? ■

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Kiwi magic

Computer graphics could be the key to three-dimensional character-based computer animation. According to a Wellington-based firm the possibilities are endless. Lyn Williamson reports.

A BRIGHTLY-COLOURED toy bumble bee, a dancing robot, and a hard-working Kiwi bird may appear on screen for only a few seconds but each one is an important step in the development of Pixel Perfect, a small Wellington-based computer graphics company which is aiming to unlock the world of three-dimmensional character-based computer animation.

"There aren't many people in the world working in this area because there is no tradition to call on. There's no school of 3-D character animation, it's all experimental," says computer graphics designer John Shiels.

What's more, he and his partner at Pixel Perfect, computer linguist Rex McIntosh, are using Cubicom Picturemaker equipment, a low-price system not held in high regard because of its cost, to prove that anything, even flying Kiwis, are possible.

"It's an extraordinary business which needs great dedication," says Shiels. "It's not a nine-to-five job. We are trying to marry traditional two-dimensional animation techniques with computer generated 3-D techniques."

The dancing robot sequence which forms the opening title sequence of *RTR Countdown,* a rock music programme, took four weeks to develop, even though it didn't contain much in terms of character development. But the sequence was good enough to be selected as one of the best three items from more than 700 Cubicomp Picturemaker system users and featured on a demonstration reel shown at the Siggraph '88 computer graphics conference in Atlanta, USA.

Drawn to scale

McIntosh and Shiels treated it as they do all their work – a live action production from storyboarding through to recording. Everything seen was first drawn to scale on paper. "The sets had to be designed and lit, and camera movements worked out as if we were actually shooting the real thing," says Shiels. "There is often more than one way of drawing something. Usually it's a trade-off between the right look and how long you have to achieve it."

Their latest project, a television series on trade called *New Zealand 2000* takes the process further towards developing character animation. "We tried to capture something of the early two-dimensional Donald Duck cartoons," says Shiels. "In the past computer graphics and particularly computer graphic character animation has had a look which has been dictated by the computer technology.

"Sequences are made up of spheres with cone hats, all obviously separate solids. In this case we've chased the design along so the Kiwi doesn't appear immediately to be that way." He skips, smiles, winks and gives the thumbs up sign as he makes his way through farm and city landscapes.

"The only limitation because of the time/cost factor is that he doesn't have any arms or legs so we have to say that is part of the design," says McIntosh. "Given more time we could have closed the body."

At the tap of a key they can create whatever lighting, colour, angle they want for a shot. In setting up a shot they simply instruct the computer where they want it to end and what's to happen in the middle.

At the moment McIntosh and Shiels share the graphics animation medium with only five others in New Zealand – none of whom is involved with character-based animation but they are convinced that as a growth industry this will not always be the case. Inevitably, with an increase in video production and a reliance on video graphics, hardware will be created to speed up what is still a very labour-intensive process.

But Pixel's Shiels and McIntosh are not overly worried about future competition. "At the moment hobbyists can fiddle around with their personal computers but the time scale is such that they couldn't hope to do it commercially. Two years down the line the technology will be available and Pixel Perfect is going to have to have moved on," says McIntosh.

"It's only a matter of time and computer generated sets will replace the real thing," he says. And in the future he believes the technique will develop fast.

"There will be not need for expensive locations — it will be possible to create a synthetic environment and view it three dimensionally with stereo sound says an optimistic McIntosh." ■

The Kiwi bird from 'New Zealand 2000'.

Sporting chance

Popular sport is under-exposed and ripe for commercial exploitation. Restrictions on TV advertising are holding it back. Lachlan Shaw reports

DESPITE the popularity of the news in Israel (said to be about 96 per cent in the ratings), there is one man who can push the news aside at 21.00 and that is the head of sport, 51-year-old Yoash Alroey. From time to time, the news disappears, usually to an earlier hour, and makes way for sport, usually a basketball or soccer match. This is nearly always an international match in which Israel is playing or perhaps something like a World Cup soccer final which is running live at the all-important 21.00 time-slot. Despite angry protests, particularly from viewers who switch on for the news and find it is long gone, Alroey – a former sportsman at national level — continues to have his successes.

The fact that sport can replace the news in a country like Israel shows the respect broadcasters have for the sporting audience. The next few years will see whether the opportunity is taken to exploit commercially this audience. For while Alroey has had successes in getting hold of resources to cover major sporting events, like the Olympics, soccer and basketball, overall viewing for sports fans is pretty limited.

Last year, Israelis got more than 100 hours of viewing from the Seoul Games. They have had World Cup soccer coverage, direct coverage of Israel in elimination rounds for World Cup and Olympic soccer and regular coverage of international basketball matches, such as those played by the very successful Maccabi Tel Aviv team in the European Cup series. Israel TV has been able to take full advantage of its membership of Eurovision to get access to the Olympics, and major soccer and basketball games. Israel is also well placed for direct links to both the Indian Ocean satellite and those over Europe and the Atlantic.

In January, Alroey made a trip to Moscow for direct coverage of the European Basketball Cup match between Maccabi Tel Aviv and the Red Army team, Ceska. This is the first time since 1976 that the Soviets have allowed such a match at home, a sign of growing links between the two countries, which don't have diplomatic relations.

In a normal week, Israel TV carries only two hourly sporting programmes. On the single government channel, devoted to educational television during the day and to Arabic services between 18.00 and 20.00 there is little time for sports fans. For example, Israel TV has a regular contract with the US National Basketball Association but basketball fans say they see little of the big American games.

Alroey says he's short of resources for coverage at home. "We mainly cover soccer and basketball and seldom have time for swimming or athletics and not much for tennis," he says. There is only one five-camera unit available for Israel TV, although there are smaller units of three and two cameras. Many soccer grounds are limited as venues for good TV coverage.

Lack of tennis

The surprising thing about Israel is the lack of TV coverage of tennis, the sport in which Israel has had the greatest international success in recent years. Its leading player, Amos Mansdorf, is now rated 20th in the world and about 14th in money earnings. Israel's crop of younger players are having significant victories in international tournaments and the country is in the world Top Group in Davis Cup tennis.

On the other hand soccer is well down in world standings and so is basketball. An independent view, albeit that of a devoted tennis player, comes from veteran journalist, Phillip Gillon, who combines the duties of television critic and sporting editor at the English-language newspaper, The Jerusalem Post. "The TV people have soccer and basketball fixed in their heads," Gillon said. "Tennis is probably the biggest participant sport in Israel now, but they can't see that. And tennis is where we are having major success overseas."

Although soccer and basketball are deeply entrenched in the political system in Israel, Gillon does not believe this affects programme decisions at

Basketball is popular. (Photo: USA Network.)

Israel TV. He includes in this the decisions to move the news bulletins. "I think its entirely an internal programmes decision," he said.

Gillon feels that Israel TV, which has limited power to use advertising and sponsorship, could increase revenue for sporting coverage.

Most observers believe that sport will come into its own once the government allows the full use of advertising on television. But this appears to be some years off.

The cable industry, now preparing to start broadcasting in the second half of this year, is at a tentative stage about sport. Cable will not be able to carry advertisements for at least five years. Four of the five new cable licensees have formed into an association for group programme buying and scheduling called the Israeli Cable TV Association. Its Managing Director, Ehud Miron, said that the association was planning a sporting channel and was negotiatimg with satellite suppliers. "We have had talks with Eurosport and with Screensport (the European satellite services) but nothing is decided yet. If they fall through, we may make up our own sports channel from other suppliers," he said. But he made clear that the cable operators were thinking in terms of packages of programmes at present, rather than entering into direct coverage of Israeli or international sport, although this was an option for the future.

The sporting establishment is wide open for commercial exploitation.

But is the government ready to open the door to truly commercial broadcasting or will opportunity disappear under committees and regulations? ■

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Censor and sensibilities

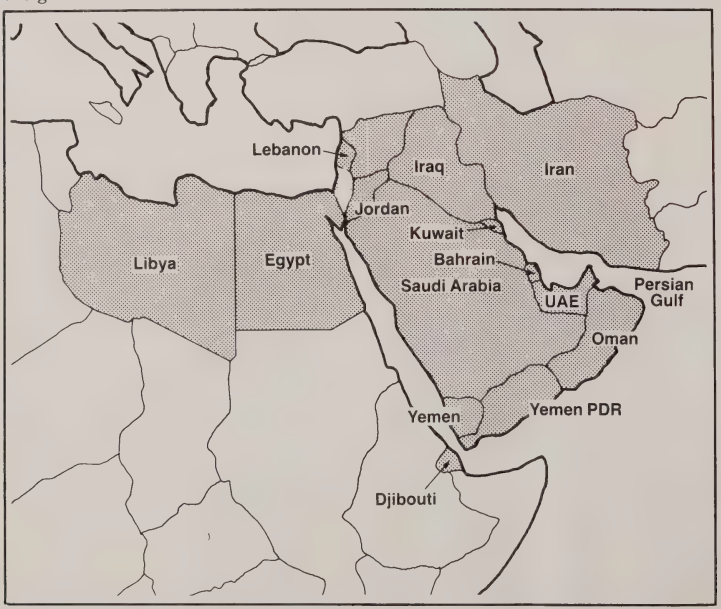
The Middle East: one of the most difficult territories to sell to; one of the most difficult for buyers to operate in. Susan Eardley examines the region's purchasing problems.

FOR CENTURIES the Middle East has been bound as a region by a cultural and moral code based on the religion of Islam. Today the teachings of the Koran and the prophet Mohammed still influence everyday life – including what may or may not be watched on TV.

The strict laws of consorship that firmly dictate the nature of the region's programming provide definite guidelines for distributors selling in to the Middle East. Of course the degree of censorship varies between countries – in Iran and some of the Gulf states adherence to Islamic law is strict, while in Egypt and Jordan current thinking is more liberal – but as a general rule programmes showing sex, adultery, alcohol, nudity, and some aspects of Christianity are likely to be rejected.

Television services in the Middle East are government-owned and most countries have more than one station: usually one Arabic station and one English (or sometimes French). All programmes presented for sale to these stations must be approved by the national Ministry of Information. Gaining approval can take time and unless western programmers carefully consider their submissions, a lot of effort can result in little gain. In several countries distributors enlist the help of local agents to ensure better results.

Most distributors agree that the Middle East TV market is fairly static. While fresh opportunities are appearing in other parts of the world with the advent of numerous new satellite services, the Middle East market remains, for the most part, unchanging. Plans for a regional satellite TV service seem to have been abandoned – the administration of such a service would be too complicated given varying levels of censorship from one country to another. There is, however, talk of some new channels such as an educational service planned for Bahrain which would take programmes subtitled into Arabic.



At the end of January, Dubai Radio and TV started running an Arab news service created for the Gulf states and based in London. News is taken from a variety of sources, and edited in London before being sent via satellite to Dubai. The news is provided mainly in English and is broadcast five days a week. Initially the news service is only being taken by Dubai.

In general, viewers in the Middle East fall into two categories: those that watch the all-Arabic stations (Channel 1) and those that watch the foreign stations (Channel 2). In the main, distributors sell to the latter. Here, demand for the pacey, action-packed programmes offered by American distributors remains high, provided of course that they conform to the local standards of decency. Above all, the most popular TV genre in the Middle East is family programming which "sells well and quite profitably," says Reeves Entertainment Group's international sales chief Mathew Ody, whose TV comedy series *Kate And Allie* has had great success in the area. Other successes for Reeves include the variety shows *That's Incredible* – which according to Ody aired uncensored throughout the region – and *Life's Most Embarrasing Moments*.

YET while demand for comedy series, TV movies and features continues, documentaries – particularly those dealing with nature and wildlife – are perhaps the easiest product to sell in the Middle East. The likes of Turner's Jacques Cousteau programmes and WQED Central TV's *National Geographic* are assured a good reception.

BBC Enterprises' Middle East sales executive, Mark Fricker, places great emphasis on this type of product. "American programming is always appreciated but they don't have the documentaries, which is where we come in," he says. Sales talk perhaps, but with the BBC this year celebrating record sales – over 1,800 hours of programming – the figures speak for themselves.

Around 60 per cent of these sales are documentaries including the old favourites *Horizon, Wildlife On One* and *QED* as well as the more recent *Supersense* series. The remaining 40 per

Agents' cartel under threat

THE relationship between distributors and their agents was never a true love-match, rather a marriage of convenience. And as such the relationship is not always harmonious, suffering – from time to time – from a clash of interests.

In the past distributors have shrugged off their disatisfaction at having to use agents in the Middle East as just another hard fact of life. Recently, however disatisfaction has started to become reaction, leading to the breakdown of some agent/distributor arrangements.

Lately, distributors have been heard to complain that the market has been monopolised by agents for too long and that a limited number of agents cannot adequately serve the interests of every distributor. Futher, some distributors are frustrated that they are unable to establish their own relationships with buyers themselves, but instead find themselves kept at arms length from the stations by traditional working practices. After years of leaving their Middle Eastern business to their agents, programmers are becoming uncomfortable about the lack of direct control that they hold. In the near future it is very likely that some major distributors will be concentrating their efforts to deal direct. ■

cent is light entertainment including the sitcoms *Sorry* and the peculiarly British *Yes, Minister* and *Yes, Prime Minister* series. *'Allo 'Allo,* a sitcom set in occupied France during World War II, has been sold in both Jordan and Dubai.

New dimension

Sales such as Central TV's satirical 'Spitting Image' demonstrate another dimension to the market. Granada TV's Richard Samuels stresses that the Middle East represents a disparate market, despite its strong cultural bond: the differences in acceptance from one country to the next can be considerable. He notes an increasing interest in pop music in Bahrain and Dubai where the upbeat youth-orientated music programme *Wired* has been sold.

Although the market is stable, in terms of prices and demand, certain subtle changes are perceptable. In some ways it is becoming tougher as it reaches maturity. "The TV service is very sophisticated in the Middle East," says Fricker. "Buyers have got their act together and know what they want – product cannot be dumped there."

At the same time, some of the traditional methods of dealing with the region are being re-evaluated. Western programmers' use of agents in several countries is virtually essential, be it to handle all negotiations or simply to offer after-sales back-up. However, for distributors operating in the ever more international and competitive world of television, the desire to deal direct, wherever possible, with the buyer is increasing – whether the buyer be South East Asian, Caribbean or Middle Eastern.

In some countries, new ground will have to be broken if the distributors are to have their wish for greater direct control. In others it is quite common for them to deal direct with buyers – Jordan being a good example. Reeves sells direct to the stations in Jordan and Saudi Arabia, where Mathew Ody recognises the need to make allowances for the time it can take to get product through the approvals process but is happy to accept this.

Egypt, which since the 19th century has had a close relationship with Europe, is generally considered to have the least stringent censorship laws in the region, yet interestingly it is essential for distributors to have local representatives there. Raymond Iskander is a familiar figure at the international TV markets. Highly regarded by his clients, he spends much of his time travelling the world buying TV material for his company, Laser, to sell to Egyptian TV: few distributors would wish to change their relationship with him. "Raymond has done an incredible job for us in Egypt," says ITC's head of Eastern sales Vicky Gubbay. "Our features and TV movies have done very well there."

American product aside, Iskander sees a move towards more British programming in Egypt but notes that Japanese and French animation together with variety from Germany, France and Spain do well.

Egypt and Jordan are the strongest countries in the field of production and there is a certain amount of co-operation between the two. But in terms of international co-productions very little is happening. "Its a question of finding the right material", says Granada's Samuels. With the considerable cultural difference that exists between the Middle East and the West, the chance of finding a suitable subject for a feature or TV movie is probably slight, but documentaries may offer more scope.

Overall the Middle East television scene is unchanging, although this year with the possibility of new channels, there may be some movement. Family programming remains at the top of any Middle Eastern buyer's shopping list, and the popularity of American material is undented. European documentaries focussing on wildlife and the natural world are perennial successes coming mainly from Europe and Britain in particular.

The Middle East market is tightly constructed, based on a traditional relationship between distributors, agents and buyers. In several countries this relationship is beneficial and unlikely to change. But in others, the next few years may show a gradual move by distributors towards direct dealing. ■

New stations for the Gulf

KUWAIT'S Information Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al Hamad Al Sabah announced last month that a new television channel will go into operation serving the residents of Failaka Island, *writes Mounir Abboud.*

The new channel will link the operating channels of KTV 1. Transmission will be via the TV station in Failaka Island and the station will show a schedule largely of feature films and specials.

At the same time UAE TV from Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates is set to begin experimental transmission for Sharjah city and neighbouring emirates, the Eastern Region and Khor Fakkan, Fu Jairah and Kalba. The trial coincides with the inauguration of the 5th Child Culture Festival taking place in Sharjah, and will provide live coverage of events there.

● Meanwhile, the Arab Gulf Corporation for joint TV programmes has decided to prepare a variety programme specially for children. To be shown all the year around the programme will provide entertainment and education at a cost of more than US$2 million. ■

Monte Carlo: same next year

The Monte Carlo market organisers have rejected plans to change the market's venue – but cramped conditions did nothing to slow this year's trading.

UNDER A bright blue sky and warm weather, the atmosphere at last month's Monte Carlo Television Festival was brisk, businesslike and relaxed.

The Mediterranean climate contributed to a feeling more often found at the Cannes markets, though many of the participants repeated the claim that Monte Carlo is the market for doing "real business", that is, setting in motion the deals that will be concluded at MIP-TV in April.

In all, some 2,000 participants attended the market, representing 82 countries. 900 buyers were there to select from the shows being sold in the Loews Hotel, according to the market's director Andre Asseo.

At practically every Monte Carlo festival, rumours circulate about an imminent change of venue; this year they took on a renewed currency with the suggestion that from next year the venue would become the Centre de Congrès next door – an attempt to accommodate the many companies who are unable to exhibit thanks to the finite space offered by the third floor of the hotel and the Grand Salon downstairs.

It was a rumour that was strongly denied by Andre Asseo, who while admitting that a change of venue had been considered, said that at present it was "out of the question."

"We will continue to stage it on the third floor. People like the 'private club' atmosphere of the Loews."

That is no doubt true of those companies fortunate enough to have exhibition space, but less enthusiastic are those who are obliged to do business from a chair in the Loews Bar.

Distributors were eager to attract for themselves a slice of the European satellite action. Buyers from Sky TV and BSB were still filling out their schedules, and paying realistic rates. Particularly pleased with its week's business was Sky TV which secured the rights to CBS's surprise hit *Lonesome Dove,* snatching it from the BBC and ITV. *Lonesome Dove*, a western, was one of the "hot items" at the market. Distributed internationally by Qintex Entertainment, it has just scored the best American ratings for a mini-series in five years. It was watched on average on 39 per cent of TV sets in use when the eight hour-long episodes were screened in early February.

As always at Monte Carlo, buyers from the Middle Eastern countries were present in force, although many of them must have feeling that their buyers' market was about to be threatened. More and more companies, it seems, are considering dealing directly with the difficult Middle Eastern territories instead of going through agents who have long held this region in the palm of their hand. (See page 32).

But of course it was programme sales and co-production negotiations that dominated the agenda. The following are some of the deals concluded at the market:

The deal between ***MCA TV International*** and ***RTL Plus,*** the German private TV network, was said to have broken records for international programme sales, though this is hard to verify as neither company would say how much the deal was worth. Included in the deal were several new feature films (*An American Tail, The Secret Of My Success, Cry Freedom* and others), 100 rerun titles and 14 TV series – the largest ever concluded by MCA with a foreign customer, said Colin Davis, the president of MCA TV. Erhart Puschnig of RTL Plus said that the dubbing costs alone of the bought material would cost US$4-5 million.

Paragon International Inc. of Canada had the most success with its package of animation special from the Hinton Studios, the three shows in the package, *Bluetoes, The Railway Dragon* and *The Teddy Bears' Picnic* were sold to a wide range of markets, including France, Italy, Hongkong, Singapore and Malaysia, the UK rights were sold to ***Disney.*** *Blizzard Island,* a children's series, was sold to the satellite broadcaster, ***BSB,*** and *Under The Umbrella Tree* was renewed by the UK's ***Children's Channel.***

Video Arts TV (VATV) has sold its series *Concerning Cancer* to ***CCTV*** in China. One of the episodes, *The Fragrant Smoke,* deals with the increasing threat in China from cigarette smoke.

Also selling to China was France's ***FMI:*** its animated series *Spartacus Or The Worlds Down Under* (26 half-hours) went to ***CCTV*** as well as ***ATV*** of Hongkong.

Worldvision's "star" programme, *Monsters,* made by Laurel Entertainment, sold into Japan, Spain, ***RTL Plus*** of Germany.

New World executives, who heard about the company's buyout while they were in Monte Carlo, still managed to sell their shows. A package of series,

continued on p36 ►

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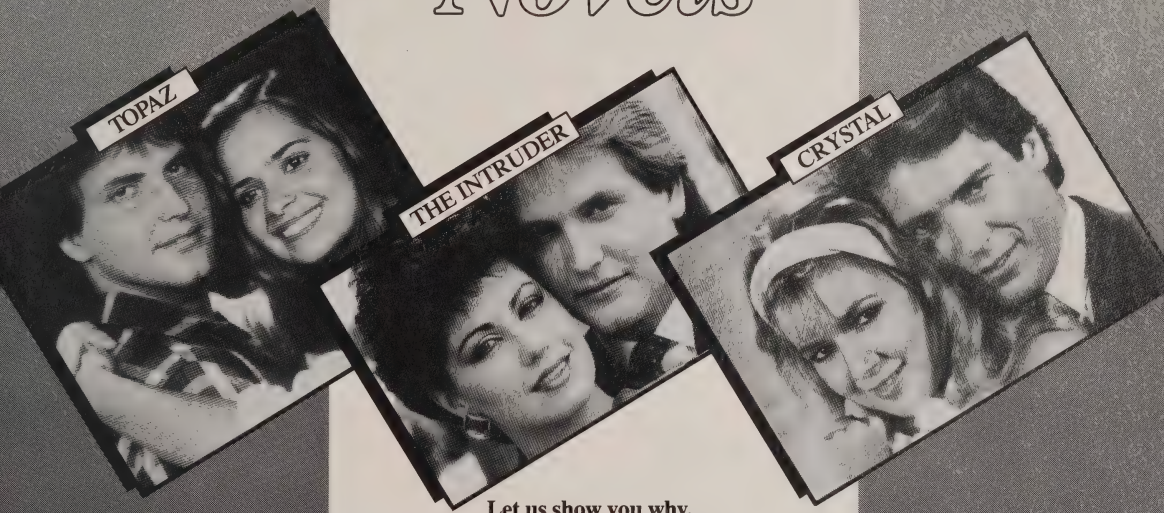

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Monte Carlo

▶ continued from p34

including *Sledge Hammer* and several mini-series went to ***BRT*** in Belgium. Other programmes were bought by Belgium's commercial channel, ***VTM***.

The ***BBC*** was active in selling to Africa and the Middle East. The comedy series *'Allo 'Allo* went to Zimbabwe and Mauritius; *Bergerac* sold to Zimbabwe; and the comedy *Bread* to Jordan.

Dead Man Out, a 90 minute movie from UK independent ***Granda TV*** and the US cable channel, ***HBO,*** was sold to Canel Plus in France. The programme was made by Robert Cooper of ***Citadel Entertainment*** in Canada.

Mister Bohm And The Herring, an animated programme from Sweden's ***SVT,*** and a winner last year of the Prix Jeunesse was sold to ***Channel 4*** of the UK.

Supersense, the ***BBC*** wildlife show, and *Alfred J. Kwak,* an animated series from ***Telecable Benelux*** of the Netherlands, was picked up by Mufid Merie, of ***Samad Productions,*** for distribution in the Middle East.

Yorkshire Television International sold its documentary *Afghantsi,* to ten countries, including New Zealand and Spain, it was reported at the market. The documentary reports the USSR's withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Cori Films' *Slow Boat From Surabaya,* a six-hour documentary, sold to the ***Arts and Entertainment*** cable network in the US, as well as to stations in Spain, Finland and Norway. ■

Support growing for green TV

THE WORLDWIDE ecological series to be presented by Bob Geldof, the organiser of Live Aid, is still in development. At Monte Carlo the BBC announced that it would be providing the British input to the series which has the working title of *Geldof's Gaia* ("Gaia" being the name of a theory of world ecology).

The programme is to be co-ordinated in a joint venture between Ideal Communications and Opix Films and was first presented at Mipcom.

Ideal's MD Kevin Christie said that he was looking for a worldwide sponsor for the show, which he hopes will become a world event in the same way that Live Aid did, and raise the global conciousness of the need to protect our environment. He suggested that it might go out at 20.00 each evening for a week across the globe, or perhaps more realistically allow stations to show the "lead up" broadcasts when they like, on the promise of participating in a final-day simulcast.

The series is planned to start filming in September with a planned broadcast date of June 1992 – the 20th anniversary of a Swedish conference on the environment.

Apart from the BBC's commitment, Christie said he was close to participation deals with Israel, Holland, Taiwan and Italy. ■

● ***TV World will be following Geldof's Gaia to the final transmission.***

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Euro-tycoons and the German angle

France's DBS project TDF-1 is finally attracting the attention of Europe's media moguls, who have formed odd alliances to bring programmes to the public. Jack Monet reports.

IN A startling reversal of fortune for the French broadcasting satellite, TDF-1, a number of large companies are now trying to get on it.

To do so, they have formed powerful and, in one case surprising, cross-frontier consortiums.

In an era of medium-power satellites, TDF-1 was written off as a highly sophisticated but pricey toy. Luxembourg's medium-power Astra was offering 16 channels to TDF-1's five, and at lower rental cost and requiring dish antennas only slighter larger than those needed for the French satellite. But TDF-1 had an ace asset: the capacity to transmit a single programme in several languages simultaneously.

That contributed to a spate of applications for TDF-1 channels in February — twenty in total, the most serious coming from three groupings, rival multinational associations led by French private channels TF-1 and Canal Plus and a combination of French state channels.

The most unexpected partnership brings together Silvio Berlusconi of Italy, Leo Kirch (of the Beta Taurus group) of West Germany and the TF-1 channel. Each of the three partners is a heavyweight in his own territory.

In their respective territories of Italy and France, Berlusconi, who owns three Italian networks and TF-1 on its own, each hold half of the television audience. Kirch offers the combination the biggest portfolio of feature film and television rights in West Germany, one of the largest in Europe.

Where the consortium surprises is in the approach of Berlusconi and TF-1, who are bitter rivals on the commercial television front in France.

The competition between TF-1 and Berlusconi's La Cinq continues in France, but is limited to that territory, according to TF-1 President Patrick Le Lay and Berlusconi's top aide in France, Angelo Codignoni. As Codignoni remarks, "The rivalry between La Cinq and TF-1 is a regional problem. With respect to the satellite, we are reasoning on a European level".

More could easily unfold soon on Berlusconi maneuverings in France. He recently told a Milan newspaper that he would like to acquire 10 to 15 per cent of TF-1, a remark that comes against a background of heavy losses at La Cinq and quarrelling between the two main private investors in TF-1, French construction tycoon Francis Bouygues and Britain's Robert Maxwell, who holds 12 per cent in the channel.

Kirch, Berlusconi and TF-1 are allied directly in two projects for channels on TDF-1. One would be a film channel for Germany where, as Le Lay noted, "there are cable networks and no well-implanted rivals". This would be based on Teleclub, the channel launched five years ago by Kirch. The second channel, called Telefan, would align programming for children and families and would include music.

Berlusconi and TF-1, without Kirch, are proposing two other channels: one for "European drama" and the other for news and sports. TDF-1's fifth channel would go for relay of TF-1 programming. The first four channels would be pay services, with subscriptions ranging from 90 to 135 francs (US$14.50 to US$21.75) monthly; TF-1 would be free.

Like TF-1's consortium, Canal Plus' partnership has a powerful German associate, Bertelsmann, the world's second largest media company. Canal Plus is seeking three channels: for a German version of Canal Plus (films and sports), for children's programming and for duplication of Canal Plus in France.

The state television channels, Antenne 2 and FR-3, are also seeking three TDF-1 channels. These would go for a duplication of Antenne-2 (mainly for diplomatic and cultural reasons), a second for sports, possibly in alliance with Rupert Murdoch's Eurosport project, and the third for La Sept, the long-planned and well-financed European cultural channel. Only La Sept is assured of a TDF-1 transponder.

THERE does not seem to be much enthusiasm for raising public funds for the other two state-channel ideas. Why, it is asked, duplicate Antenne-2 on DBS when the channel is already represented on a channel in the skies: the European TV-5 service, which groups Antenne-2 with the francophone programmes of Belgium's RTBF, Switzerland's SSR and Quebec.

In fact, paradoxical reasons are offered for state programming's being on TDF-1 as well as La Sept: the Postal-Telecommunications Ministry (PTT) would not mind seeing Antenne 2 on the satellite because the less attractive the programming is on the satellite, the less competition TDF-1 would offer cable networks – in which the ministry has invested.

It will be interesting to see how the French ministry, the CSA, allocates the transponders in the rivalry between TF-1 and Canal Plus — or is it Kirch versus Bertelsmann? — for what, in the short term, is a battle for the German territory. A decision will be reached soon. ■

Berlusconi Kirch TF-1	Proposing 2 channels: ● Film channel for Germany (pay-TV) ● Telefan: family programmes (pay-TV)
Berlusconi TF-1	Proposing 2 channels: ● Relaying TF-1 programmes (free) ● European Drama (pay-TV)
Canal Plus (allied with Bertelsman)	Proposing 3 channels: ● German Canal Plus ● Children's programmes ● Relaying Canal Plus
Antenne 2 FR3	Proposing 3 channels: ● Relaying A-2 ● Sports (with Eurosport?) ● La Sept (culture)

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Briefly . . . MTV and Premiere

The fourth in a series of handy round-ups of the European satellite channels.

MTV EUROPE, the 24-hour non-stop music station for the youth market has become the latest channel to move onto Astra – the European broadcast satellite launched at the end of last year.

A joint venture between British media mogul Robert Maxwell's Mirror Group, Viacom International and British Telecom, MTV Europe was launched in 1987 and is part of an international network extending from Australia to the USA. Billed as the first TV network to "reach the youth of the world through the universal language of music", MTV originated in the USA eight years ago where, as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Viacom, it now reaches 40,000,000 homes and has some 50 cable affiliates. The European station is available on cable networks in 12 countries and claims to have a potential audience of over seven million households.

The move to Astra should bring improved transmission quality and increase MTV's appeal to cable distributors. "Astra is going to be the hottest bird in Europe," says Howard Smith, Deputy Director for network development at MTV. "Every cable distributor will have an Astra receiver at its head end." In Holland and Belgium in particular, where cable coverage is around 70 per cent, MTV hopes to be able to expand its market substantially.

At the same time, the switch to the medium-powered Astra satellite takes MTV straight into the fledgling DBS TV market in the UK, where cable has a much lower level of penetration at around 2 per cent. Much has been made of the slow take-up of the Astra channels so far, due in part to the lack of availability of subscriber satellite dishes. Nevertheless, according to Smith, MTV aims to be received by between 200,000 and 500,000 cable and DBS households by the end of 1989. High expectations by any standards but essential if advertisers are to be pulled in.

Since its launch, MTV has been a subscription service in the UK and

Swatch Next: sign of the time.

supported by advertising in the rest of Europe. Although this year there are no plans to alter the position in Britain, Smith admits "we will be weighing our options regarding subscription in Europe".

The concept of programming aimed specifically at young people and their interests is one that is gaining acceptance increasingly in Europe. In the UK both the BBC and Channel 4 recognised the gap in the market early in the 80s and started broadcasting music and fashion-oriented programmes aimed at the cash-rich young.

As a station devoted entirely to the interests of Europeans in the 16-34 age group, MTV believes it can offer advertisers an effective way in to this potentially lucrative yet elusive market. Certainly in recent months, MTV has landed some major advertising and sponsorship deals with international companies. The first of these was a three year contract with Levi Strauss; the next an agreement with Braun, the German manufacturer of electronic products, for the sponsorship of MTV's *European Top Twenty Show;* and the most recent, a sponsorship agreement with the Swiss watch manufacturer Swatch.

Swatch Next is a series of one to three minute features looking at different aspects of design and fashion – from furniture to disco dance steps.

But MTV is operating in an increasingly competitive market and is by no means unique in its appeal to the youth market. The British satellite service Super Channel, since its take over by Italian company Beta TV, is now showing signs that it intends to target the youth audience of Europe – introducing multi-lingual music dominated programming. At the same time it seems likely that one of the two remaining UK DBS channels will be awarded to a music and lifestyle channel aimed at people under 25. The British Virgin Group which still owns 45 per cent of Super Channel may bid for this franchise – it already owns the British channel Music Box.

Around 70 per cent of programmes broadcast by MTV originate in Europe, often in the station's London studios. The remaining 30 per cent comes from MTV USA and includes such regulars as *Remote Control,* a game show where contestants answer trivia questions on

MTV EUROPE

London Headquarters

Managing director *William H Roedy.*
Executive director *Anne Newcombe.*
Director of sales and network development *Monica Dodi.*
Director of finance *Phil Callaghan.*
Director of music programming and acquisitions *Brian Diamond.*

Centro House, 20-23 Mandela Street, London, NW1. Tel: (44)(0) 1 383 4250.

Munich Office

Network development manager *Cornelia Much.*
Sales manager *Andrea Macdonald.*
Tel: 010 49 89 49 20 59.

Amsterdam Office

Network development manager *Michael Bakker.*
Sales executive *Patty Geneste.*
Tel: 010 31 20 20 33 93.

Brussels Office

Network development manager *Chantal Deltenre.*
Tel: 010 322 536 8653.

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Director of marketing *Jonathan Martin.*

6 D'Arblay Street, London, W1A 28D.
Tel: 44(0) 1 434 0611.

TV, music, films and pop culture, and *Club MTV* a "dance extravaganza."

The European-produced shows are diverse, ranging from *The Week In Rock*, a review of the week's music business news; *MTV Spotlight* which focusses on a particular artist or group in concert; *The Steve Blame Show*, a weekly interview with a pop personality; and *MTV At The Movies* and *Kino*, two shows looking at the latest cinema releases. The theory behind the programming schedule is that whatever your particular tastes in music or related fashions, if you are young, MTV will provide something to interest you. The overall effect is intended to be upbeat, spontaneous and exciting.

In addition to his 50 per cent stake in MTV, Robert Maxwell owns 30 per cent of the UK cable movie channel Premiere. Launched in 1984, the channel broadcasts feature films 12 hours a day and is currently seen in 100,000 cable households in Britain. Maxwell's fellow shareholders are British Telecom, Columbia Pictures, Home Box Office, Showtime/Movie Channel and 20th Century Fox. To date, the success of Premiere has been limited by the low penetration of cable in the UK. Now the channel will be seriously hurt by the arrival of Sky TV and BSB with their film channels Sky Movies and the Movie Channel. As these two battle it out for major film agreements Premiere could find itself the loser.

And by an ironic twist Premiere now faces a situation where two of its shareholders are in fact selling product to its new rivals – Columbia to BSB and 20th Century Fox to Sky. Premiere's future must be at least questionable although the channel and its shareholders are remaining stoically silent.

Industry sources confirm that Premiere has approached both Sky and BSB with a view to a buy-out but has been turned down by both, probably because of its comparatively poor line-up of films and because of the debts that the purchaser would have to assume. Robert Maxwell believes firmly in the increasingly international nature of the television industry and it is well known that the Maxwell Entertainment Group is serious about creating a strong presence in Europe – and possibly in the USA. Other Maxwell television interests include 12 per cent of the national broadcaster TF1 in France and a small group of French production companies, 20 per cent of Central TV (UK) and 100 per cent of British Cable Systems. ■

UNITED KINGDOM: TV

Week ending February 19, 1989

Rank	Programme	Channel	Viewers (Millions)
1	Coronation Street	ITV	24.39
2	Coronation Street	ITV	21.15
3	Eastenders	BBC	20.90
4	Neighbours	BBC	20.44
5	Neighbours	BBC	20.37
6	Eastenders	BBC	20.21
7	Neighbours	BBC	19.70
8	Neighbours	BBC	19.46
9	Neighbours	BBC	18.50
10	A Bit of a Do	ITV	14.78
11	'Allo 'Allo	BBC	14.14
12	The Bill	ITV	14.19
13	This is Your Life	ITV	13.91
14	Wish Me Luck	ITV	13.71
15	Wish You were Here	ITV	13.59
16	Paul Daniels Magic Show	BBC	13.55
17	Antiques Roadshow	BBC	13.28
18	Flying Squad	ITV	13.24
19	The Two of Us	ITV	13.22
20	The Bill	ITV	13.09

Source: BARB

FRANCE: TV

Week ending March 5, 1989

Rank	Programme	Viewers	Rating
TF1			
1	Le bêbete show (Variety)	25%	36
2	Sacrée soirée (variety)	22%	31
3	Sébastien c'est fou (variety)	20%	26
4	La roue de la fortune	20%	32
5	La roue de la fortune	20%	30
A2			
1	Le cercle rouge (film)	18%	27
2	La soupe aux choux (film)	16	21
3	La nuit des Césars (variety)	15%	22
4	Sos disparus: (Telefilm)		
5	Les soeurs du nord	13%	20
6	Maguy (series)	13%	19
FR3			
1	Fantomas contre	16%	22
2	Scotland Yard (film)		
3	La classe (variety)	10%	13
4	L'impossible évasion (tv-film)	10%	14
5	La classe (variety)	9%	12
6	Benny Hill (series)	9%	11
CT			
1	Top 50 (variety)	4%	5
2	Ca cartoon	3%	4
3	Nulle part ailleurs	2%	4
4	Nulle part ailleurs	2%	3
5	Top 30 (variety)	2%	4
LA5			
1	Un drôle de flic (film)	11%	14
2	Vive les femmes (film)	11%	20
3	Paradise motel (TV film)	6%	9
4	Douce revanche (TV film)	6%	9
5	Hellinger mène l'enquête (TV-film)	6%	9
M6			
1	A about de souffle made	4%	6
2	in the USA (film)		
3	La scoumoune (film)	4%	5
4	Cosby show	4%	6
5	Cosby show	3%	5
6	Cosby show	3%	5

Source: Mediametrie

USA: TV

Week ending February 17, 1989

Rank	Programme	Channel	Rating
1	The Cosby Show	NBC	26.2
2	A Different world	NBC	24.1
3	60 Minutes	CBS	23.1
3	Cheers	NBC	22.8
4	The Golden Girls	NBC	22.8
5	Murder, She Wrote	CBS	22.5
6	Roseanne	ABC	21.9
7	L.A. Law	NBC	20.4
8	Empty Nest	NBC	20.1
9	Hunter	NBC	19.5
10	Unsolved Misteries	NBC	19.3

Source: AC Nielsen

CANADA: TV

Week ending February 19, 1989

Rank	Programme	Viewers
CBC		
1	Dallas	2,368,000
2	Hockey Night in Canada	2,162,000
3	Magical World of Disney	1,937,000
4	CBC National News	1,829,000
5	Raccoons	1,575,000
CTV		
1	Cosby Show	3,392,000
2	Passion and Paradise Pt.1	2,684,000
3	Different World	2,675,000
4	Cheers	2,594,000
5	Matlock	2,297,000
Global		
1	Murder She Wrote	1,382,000
2	60 Minutes	1,257,000
3	Who's The Boss	777,000
4	Father Dowling Mystery	665,000
5	Wheel of Fortune	616,000
R-C		
1	Lance et Compte 3	2,710,000
2	L'Heritage	2,112,000
3	Dames De Coeur	2,041,000
4	Le Grand Remous	1,578,000
5	Samedi De Rire	1,470,000
TVA		
1	Entre Chien et Loup	1,957,000
2	Chop Suey	1,653,000
3	Fais-Moi Un Dessin	1,526,000
4	Epopee Rock	1,382,000
5	Dynastie	1,360,000

Source: Nielsen

NEW ZEALAND: TV

Week ending March 4, 1989

Rank	Programme	Channel	Rating
1	Top Half	1	22
2	Alf	2	21
3	Top Town	2	21
4	Boxing Special	1	21
5	Incredible Sunday	2	21
6	Neighbours	2	20
7	TV's Censored Bloopers	2	20
8	Neighbours	2	20
9	Sonny Spoon	2	19
10	Nutcracker: Part 1	2	18
11	A question of Sport	1	18
12	Nutcracker: Part 2	2	18
13	That's Fairly Interesting	2	17
14	Coronation Street	21	17
15	Neighbours	2	17

Source: AGB

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

April 10	**Paris,** *Mediavec. 4th International Market of Audiovisual Communications. Tel: (1) 4533 7450.*
April 13	**London,** *TV and Film Financing (Tel: 0536 204224).*
April 12	**London,** *Film and Television Production for the International and multi-channel markets (seminars). (Tel: 01 236 4080).*
April 21-26	**Cannes, France,** *MIP-TV (Tel: 499 2317).*
April 21-30	**Houston, Texas,** *11th Houston Fest (Tel: 731 965 9955).*
April 29-May 2	**Las Vegas,** *USA. 67th Annual Convention & International Exposition and 43rd Annual Broadcast Engineering Conference. (NAB Convention). Tel: (202) 429 5356.*
May 7-13	**Switzerland,** *Golden Rose of Montreux.*
May 8-11	**Wembley, UK,** *Audio Visual 89 (Tel: 01-660 6243).*
May 21-27	**Stockholm, Sweden.** *Input '89. International Public TV Screening.*
May 23-26	**Munich, Germany.** *Prix Jeunesse Seminar Conference subject: Target audience young people — in search of a phantom? (Tx: 521070. Fax 5900 3053).*
June 4-9	**Gotland,** *Nordic Screenings. Hosts SVT. Tel: 46-8-784 3303. Fax: 46-8-784 2271*
June 4-10	**Banff, Canada,** *Banff Television Festival, Alberta. (Tel:(403) 762-3060. Tx: 03-822 804. Fax: (403) 762 5357).*
June 17-22	**Montreux, Switzerland,** *XVI Simposium International de Television (Tel: 41 21 963 32 20).*
August 26-Sept 3	**Berlin,** *International Radio and TV Fair.*
September 12-16	**Moscow, USSR,** *XXIIIrd International Teleforum — Intervision market for TV and video programmes.*
October 7-11	**Valencia,** *Mercafilm 89/Video & TV, (Tel: 6 33215 06).*
October 8-15	**Plovdiv, Bulgaria,** *17th Golden Chest International TV Festival. (Tx: 22558 Radio BG).*
October 24-27	**Warsaw, Poland.** *Tele Audio Visual Exhibition (Tel: 26 49 83).*
October 25-28	**Frankfurt, Germany,** *Broadcast 89 (Tel: 069 7575 64 52).*

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Out-takes

THE VIEWERS were waiting — but Ghana's favourite comedians hasn't turned up at the studio, and bosses at Ghana Television were beside themselves with worry. After all, it was their longest-running and most popular variety show. After 16 years, the *Osofo Dadzie* comedy group didn't show for rehearsals one Wedneday.

The comedy group simply had slipped out of the country by air the night before. Last month, several weeks after their intial departure, they sent a letter of apology from London to the producer. They had gone off to fulfill a number of European engagements.

■■■

HEARD OF Morton Downey Jr. yet? Don't worry if you haven't: pretty soon nobody else will have either. Downey is the lead proponent of one of this season's less palatable developments in American TV. Basically, he is deliberately obnoxious, loud in his political and social views and as a result has gained a brief degree of notoriety with his syndicated talk-show (*The Morton Downey Jr. Show*) which almost single-handledly coined the phrase "trash-TV".

(Of course, it took Geraldo Rivera to manage a full-scale brawl on live TV, but he couldn't have done it without Mort...)

But last month the ABC affiliate station in Los Angeles decided they'd had enough of Mort, no doubt aided in their decision by a seven per cent drop in the ratings and the refusal of several national advertisers to buy time on the programme. Ratings in another main market, Chicago, have also declined.

Latest news: Mort is cleaning up his act.

■■■

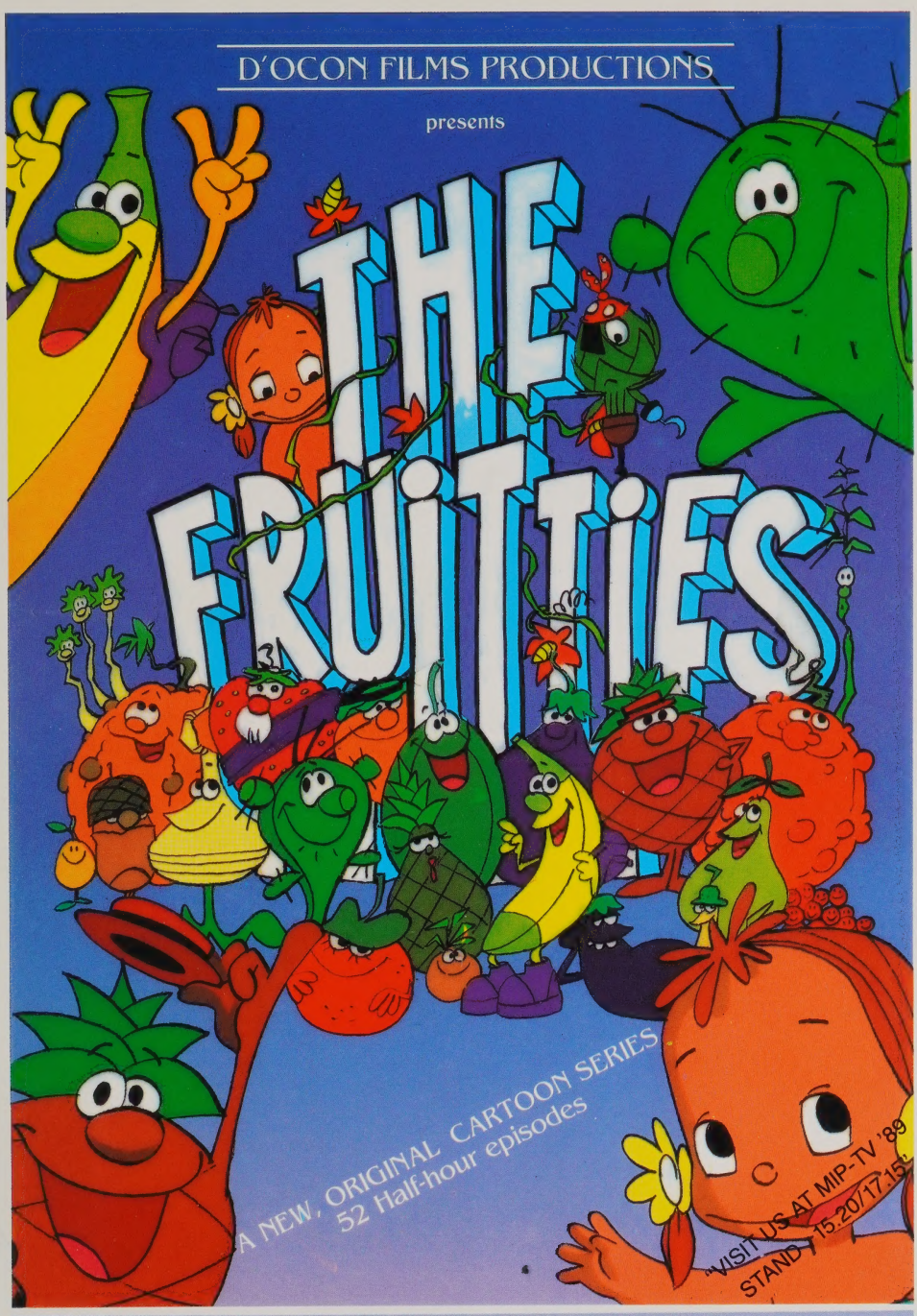
THE POWER of the advertiser is quite phenomenal in America, It took just one letter from a stuffy old crank in Detroit to a few manufacturers to persuade them to withdraw their advertising from the Fox (mini) network's *Married...With Children*. Coca Cola, Proctor & Gamble and McDonalds will not be showing their ads during the comedy programme, made by Columbia Television. Apparently the complainant found this exceedingly ordinary comedy offensive. Following publicity about the row (if it can be termed such) ratings for the show have — predictably — shot up.

■■■

WHEN IS A telethon not a telethon? When it's *Comic Relief* in the UK, it seems. The BBC's annual "night of comedy" to raise money for a variety of good causes may not be called a telethon, TV World was informed by a lady on the other end of the phone. The reason? BBC and ITV have a 'gentlemen's agreement' (what...another one?) that each may show only one telethon a year. The BBC's is *Children In Need*; ITV's is entitled, imaginatively, *The Telethon*. So despite the fact that for several hours one Friday night viewers were asked to part with their cash, in between episodes of favourite situation comedies and "serious" TV personalities sending up their own programmes, it was not a telethon. OK?

Viewers on the night witnessed an unusual technological feat. Along with a hand-held camera, *Comic Relief* presenter Lenny Henry left the BBC-1 studio and burst in unannounced on Clive James's desperately dull talk-show, transmitting live on BBC-2. Better still was the stunt that followed: Henry began a soundlinked conversation with co-presenter Mike Smith back in the BBC-1 studio, and instructed viewers to use their remote control "zappers" to flick between BBC-1 and BBC-2 to listen to and watch both sides of their chat.

At the last count, credit card donations on the night totalled £10.6 million (US$18.5 million). ■



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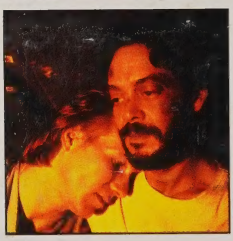

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